



DADABHAI NAOROJI:

*The Grand Old Man  
of India*

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DADABHAI NAOROJI  
(1913)

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*The Grand Old Man  
of India*

*by*

R. P. MASANI



*With a Foreword by*

MAHATMA  
GANDHI

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## FOREWORD

IT was on September 4, 1888, that I sailed from Bombay for London with three letters of introduction, the most precious being for the G.O.M. of India, Dadabhai Naoroji. The writer was a Maharashtrian doctor, a friend of the family. The worthy doctor told me the G.O.M. did not know him personally, in fact he had never even had the *darshan* of the G.O.M. "But," said the doctor, "what does it matter? Everyone knows him and adores him as India's great son and champion. He has exiled himself for us. I claim to know him by his service of India. You will see that my letter will serve you just as well as if I had known him personally. The fact is, you need no introduction to him. Your being an Indian is sufficient introduction. But you are a youngster, untravelled and timid. This letter will give you courage enough to go to the G.O.M. and all will be smooth sailing for you." And so it was. When I reached London, I soon found that Indian students had free access to the G.O.M. at all hours of the day. Indeed, he was in the place of father to every one of them, no matter to which province or religion they belonged. He was there to advise and guide them in their difficulties. I have always been a hero-worshipper. And so Dadabhai became real Dada to me. The relationship took the deepest root in South Africa, for he was my constant adviser and inspiration. Hardly a week passed without a letter from me to him describing the condition of Indians in South Africa. And I well remember that whenever there was a reply to be expected, it came without fail in his own handwriting, in his inimitably simple style. I never received a typed letter from him. And during my visits to England from South Africa I found that he had for office a garret perhaps eight feet by six feet. There was hardly room in it for another chair. His desk, his chair, and the file of papers filled the room. I saw that he wrote his letters in copying ink and press-copied them himself.

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The story of a life so noble and yet so simple needs no introduction from me or anybody else. May it be an inspiration to the reader even as Dadabhai living was to me!

M. K. GANDHI

*October 19, 1938*

## PREFACE

**I**T is given to but few to live so full and complete a life as that of Dadabhai Naoroji. In India longevity is rarely associated with strenuous intellectual labour and political activity. Dadabhai<sup>1</sup> was a remarkable exception to the general rule.

When this herald of self-government for India was born in Bombay in 1825, the independence of certain South American States had just been recognized, and the New World had been called into existence "to redress the balance of the Old." In England it was the reign of King George IV; in India, the East India Company, though still a trading corporation, held sway. When the new-born babe was cutting his teeth, the Governor of Bombay, Mountstuart Elphinstone, was speculating on the consequences of his educational policy and the time when the fitness of the people to govern themselves should lead to voluntary or enforced transfer of power into their hands. When Dadabhai was a lad of nine, learning the English alphabet, Macaulay was writing his historic minutes in favour of English education, minutes which were to determine the subsequent course of Indian education and progress.

When, after the "Mutiny," India was placed under the direct government of the Crown, Dadabhai was a young partner in the first Indian commercial firm established in England, a philosopher-trader who startled his partners by his idealism in business, a patriot who was concerned more with the prestige and welfare of his country than with profits. When Gladstone opened his Irish campaign in the House of Commons, Dadabhai started his Indian campaign in England, educating the British on their responsibilities in India and demonstrating to them by relentless statistics and remorseless logic how India was being bled under the prevailing system of administration. When Lord Ripon

<sup>1</sup> Following Indian usage, the hero of this story will be called by his first name, Dadabhai. Naoroji, the name by which he was called in England, was his father's name.

inaugurated the era of local self-government in India, Dadabhai had already made a name for himself as an authority on Indian economics and politics, engaged in a strenuous struggle to secure for the sons of India an increasing share in the administration of their own country. When Lord Curzon attempted to put back the clock and when New India was in open revolt against the autocratic Viceroy, the hero of our story was past four score years, still carrying on a country-wide platform campaign in the United Kingdom, demanding redress of India's wrongs and proclaiming self-government as the only remedy.

During the closing years of Queen Victoria's reign Dadabhai entered the House of Commons as a Gladstonian and an ardent advocate of Home Rule. In the House and on the public platform he demanded that British rule in India should be dominated by British principles. In the year 1911 he had the happiness to welcome Queen Victoria's grandson—King George V—to the shores of India. Three years later, when the Great War broke out, he made a stirring appeal to the people to stand by the side of the British Empire. At the same time he impressed upon British statesmen the wisdom of granting to India the same rights of self-government within the Empire as had been conceded to the Dominions. He learnt from friends in England that epoch-making reforms, heralding the dawn of self-government, were well on the way. He was not, however, destined to see the fruition of his life-long dream; the end came sooner than expected, seven weeks before the historic declaration of August 20, 1917.

The story of a life which thus spanned several memorable epochs in the history of India and left its impress on the progress of the people is, surely, worth telling. I could have wished that the work had been undertaken by one who had breathed the same political air as he breathed and been associated with him, for at least some years, in his manifold activities. In 1911 I offered to sit at the feet of Dadabhai and to take notes for the future biographer. A friend to whom I unburdened my mind said: "Gokhale intends to write the biography and he has arranged to send his assistant

to Dadabhai for notes and reminiscences." "Nothing better," I replied. Gokhale, however, predeceased Dadabhai by two years without having begun the work.

In these pages I have tried to give as faithful an account as possible of a simple but heroic life devoutly dedicated to the service of humanity. It is based mainly on Dadabhai's private papers. Unfortunately, a large collection of documents relating to his early activities was found to be worm-eaten and was destroyed when his house was acquired, during his absence in England, by the Bombay Improvement Trust. The story of that period had, therefore, to be founded on such data as I could get from personal inquiries and various publications. The material for the remainder of his life, from 1876 onwards, was there, but it had suffered from the ravages of time and transport. The task of examining, single-handed, during my leisure hours, all such faded and crumbling papers seemed beyond me. It was, however, possible for me to pay undivided attention to the work during the last twelve months.

It seems to me that the delay in writing this biography is not an unmixed evil. I often heard people speak derisively, during recent years, of constitutional methods of agitation, the key-note of the policy of Congressmen of the past generation. I also noticed that faith in British justice—the rock on which that policy was based—had been fading. The times were out of joint. The Congress, during the last two decades, was driven to pursue the policy of non-co-operation and civil disobedience. Who, in such times, would have heeded Dadabhai's advice to hold fast to constitutional methods or shared his faith and his hopes in British character and British justice?

During the days of the civil disobedience campaign people asked: "What would Dadabhai do, were he alive today?" The remnants of the Old Congress gave one answer, New India gave another. When I met Mahatma Gandhi on board the *S S. Pilsna* in December 1931, during his voyage to Bombay, after the Round Table Conference, I referred the matter to him specifically.



"Don't you think," I asked, "Dadabhai's policy, which the present generation ridicules as a mendicant policy, was the right one, considering the circumstances then prevailing?"

"Yes," he replied.

Then, promptly anticipating my second question, he added: "And I believe that if he were alive to-day he would follow the same policy that I have been pursuing for the last few years."

How far this belief was justified, how far Dadabhai's own latter-day utterances, which have been unreservedly cited in this book, lend support to it, may be left for the reader to judge.

Happily, there is now a truce between Government and the Congress. After years of boycott of Councils, Congress ministries are now in office in most provinces. Heretofore the history of India has been the history of an alien bureaucracy out of tune with the political pulsations of the people. Now commences the era of national government. Several fundamental issues, however, still remain to be settled. Moreover, many fear that the ship of co-operation may founder on the rock of "Complete Independence." After all, it is a question of definition and adjustment, and Mahatma Gandhi may be trusted, if called upon, to cut the Gordian knot. Such being the vista of possibilities opened out by the current policy of co-operation and constitutional progress, the present appears to be an opportune moment to make Dadabhai live again and to recall and revivify his stirring words of reproof as well as of hope. The story of his untiring effort for peaceful and orderly progress, hampered at every stage by the bureaucracy, has for the British Government and nation, as well as for the people of India, a lesson writ in tears and sorrows and suffering.

Several small sketches of Dadabhai's career were written during his lifetime. To these, and also to Messrs. Natesan & Co.'s compilation of his speeches and writings, my acknowledgments are due. I am also indebted to Mr. C. F. Andrews, Deewan Bahadur, K. M. Jhaveri, and Mr. S. T. Sheppard, who have evinced keen interest in the progress of this biography and favoured me with valued suggestions. I had to approach numerous persons in India, England, and America for information or advice.

To all of them, particularly to Sir Frank Brown, Honorary Secretary, East India Association, I am grateful for willing assistance. Finally, I tender my thanks to Mahatma Gandhi for his Foreword. He is, so to say, the apostolic heir and successor to the place occupied by Dadabhai in the heart of the people of India. The Grand Old Man of India could not have wished for a more lion-hearted or a more noble-minded successor. No one has contributed more than this idol of the people towards the fulfilment of Dadabhai's dream of Home Rule, and there is none in India to-day so well qualified as he is to form an accurate estimate of the life and character of the great patriot.

R. P. M.

*December 5, 1938*



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## CHAPTER I

# EARLY DAYS

NOT many years ago, there lay seven desolate islets where the city of Bombay has now sprung up, forming the main gateway between the East and the West. Here, scattered along the coast-line, were several fishing villages of the early settlers. One of these, known as Mandvi, after the old *mandovim* or custom house, has since been transformed into a busy emporium. Bhattias, Banias, Khojas, Bohras, and Memons, pillars of Indian commerce, muster strong in this labyrinth of store-houses and slums, but the otherwise ubiquitous Parsi is rarely to be found. It was not so a hundred years ago, when several Parsi families had their homes in this locality.

One of those inhabitants was a poor priest, Naoroji Palanji Dordi, who lived with his wife, Manekbai, in a lowly house in Khadak. Great was the joy of this couple when, on September 4, 1825, a son was born to them, their first and only child. They named him Dadabhai. What made them select this Hindu name? Was it a mere accident, or was it because the fairy god-mother, who visits the homes of Indian children on the *Chhathi*, or the sixth night after their birth,<sup>1</sup> whispered to the fond mother that her son was destined to fill a large space in contemporary history and to become the Grand Old Man—the *Dada*—of Hindustan?

Be that as it may, Dadabhai carried his lofty destiny in his name. To love and serve Mother India, as none of her sons had done before him, to get grey in that service and still to knock at England's door for the redress of India's wrongs, to teach his countrymen to be free, and then in the twilight of old age

<sup>1</sup> It is a popular belief among certain communities in India that this fairy visits the home of every new-born babe and inscribes its fortune in letters invisible on the piece of paper provided for the purpose.



to see them placed on the path of self-government—this was the mission of his life; and he gloried in it as much as he rejoiced in the title “Dada” with which his countrymen loved to honour him.

Is it vanity (he once asked) that I should take a great pleasure in being hailed as the Grand Old Man of India? No, that title, which speaks volumes for the warm, grateful, and generous hearts of my countrymen, is to me, whether I deserve it or not, the highest reward of my life.

Dadabhai's ancestors came from Navsari, a small town in the territory of the Gaekwar of Baroda, originally known as *Nagmandal*, or snake-land. It is related that finding its climate as salubrious as that of the ancient city Sari, in Iran, the early Parsi settlers of the place called it *Nao Sari*, or “New Sari.” What Bombay owes to the enterprise of the Parsis in British India, Navsari owes to the achievements of their co-religionists in the Gaekwar's dominions. It is the pride of this stronghold of Parsi priesthood and the religious centre of the Parsis of Western India that it has produced some of the most famous *dasturs* (prelates) and *desais* (headmen), who owned extensive territories, enjoyed great prerogatives, and rendered eminent services to society under successive rulers, and that it has been the birth-place of men like the first Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy and Jamsetjee Tata, who have shed lustre on the Indian people.

Many a resident of Navsari claims that the town is the birth-place of Dadabhai also, but there is no warrant for it. His ancestors were, no doubt, domiciled in Navsari. The branch of the Dordi family, in which Dadabhai was born, owned an estate in the Dharampore State, about twenty miles from Navsari. Here his grandfather, and his father, too, before he settled in Bombay, carried on agricultural pursuits. The family record, however, shows a long unbroken chain of priests tracing their descent from Zarthost Mobed, the oldest known ancestor, who was the first Parsi priest to arrive in Navsari. In those days a Parsi priest considered it a religious duty to have his son

admitted to the priesthood. Had Dadabhai's father lived until he attained the age of initiation, he would probably have insisted on Dadabhai becoming a *Mobed* and ministering to the spiritual needs of his community. It is interesting to speculate how in that event he might have devoted himself to the religious interests of the Parsi community with the zest of a reformer even more fervid than the spirit of patriotism which marked his advocacy of the secular interests of his motherland. How vehemently would he have denounced religious tyrannies instead of the economic disabilities and political injustice under which he found his country groaning for redress! A word from such a priest might have silenced the din of many bitter controversies; the priesthood might probably have been restored to its ancient dignity; and the religious and social progress of the community greatly accelerated. This, however, was not to be, unfortunately for the Parsi priesthood, but fortunately for all the people of India, including the Parsis. The regeneration of the country was of far greater moment than the reformation of a particular creed. It was, therefore, ordained that Dadabhai should make the first gap in the family record of uninterrupted sacerdotal service, and become the high priest of Indian Nationalism. Dadabhai, however, did go through the *Navar* ceremony, qualifying him for priesthood, when he was fourteen years of age.

Gujarat is the "Garden of India" and Navsari is the "Garden of Gujarat" famous for its fragrant flowers and perfumes, "the like of which," says Abul Fazl, the historian, "is nowhere to be found." Tradition relates that one of the ancestors of Dadabhai, Chandji Kamdin, made the best perfumes of the day. His fame travelled from Navsari to Delhi and reached the ears of Nur Jahan Begum. She desired to know the recipe and induced her husband, the Emperor Jahangir, to send for Chandji with his perfumes. On receipt of the royal invitation Chandji left for Delhi with jars of four select varieties of *attar*, which he laid at the feet of the Emperor. In return, he was entertained in Delhi as a royal guest and was granted a hundred *bighas* of land with the title of *Mulla Jamasp*.

"How far this account is correct," wrote Dadabhai in reply to certain questions put to him by a journalist, in the year 1881, "I am unable to say till I see all the documents connected with the matter."

This laconic reply was typical of the man. Never to accept a statement without verification, never to make a statement without being convinced of the truth of it, was the rule of his life; and if he did say anything which was not borne out by facts, even his bitterest critic refrained from questioning his credentials.

It was left to Dr. Jivanji Modi to examine the documents and sift all the evidence. His erudite research has thrown much light on the historic background on which the tradition rested.<sup>1</sup> In a paper read before the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, on March 22, 1920, he points out that the royal order, issued in the name of "Victorious Nur-ud-din Muhammad Jahangir Badshah Gazi," announced the grant of land measuring approximately a hundred *bighas* in the town of Navsari, exempt from all taxes, "in aid of the livelihood of Mulla Jamasp and his nephew Mulla Hoshang, two members of the Dordi family." The *firman*, which is now in the possession of the Dordi family, dated August 24, 1618, records the facts that Mulla Jamasp and Mulla Hoshang waited on the Emperor and presented to him "four goblets of oil *fulel* (prepared from jasmin)." "Chandji" was one of the Hindu names then current among the Parsi community. While granting the *firman*, Jahangir substituted for that name the Iranian name Jamasp.

According to the traditional account, the perfume was taken to Delhi in response to the wishes of Nur Jahan, but it appears from Jahangir's autobiography that on the date of the royal decree the Emperor was in Ahmedabad. There is no doubt, however, that Mulla Jamasp did on one occasion visit the Mughal Court, for his name is mentioned in the list, given in the *Bombay Gazetteer*, of

<sup>1</sup> The author is indebted for further particulars concerning the history of the Dordi family to Dr. Jahangir Behramji Dordi, F.R.C.S., who is now maintaining the traditions of his illustrious house for social service and civic usefulness.

the Parsis who visited the Court of Akbar. Whether he went to Ahmedabad with the offering, in response to an invitation, or simply took the opportunity of paying homage to the sovereign, whose father's Court he had visited and whose hospitality he had enjoyed, is a matter of surmise. In all other respects the family tradition and history go together.

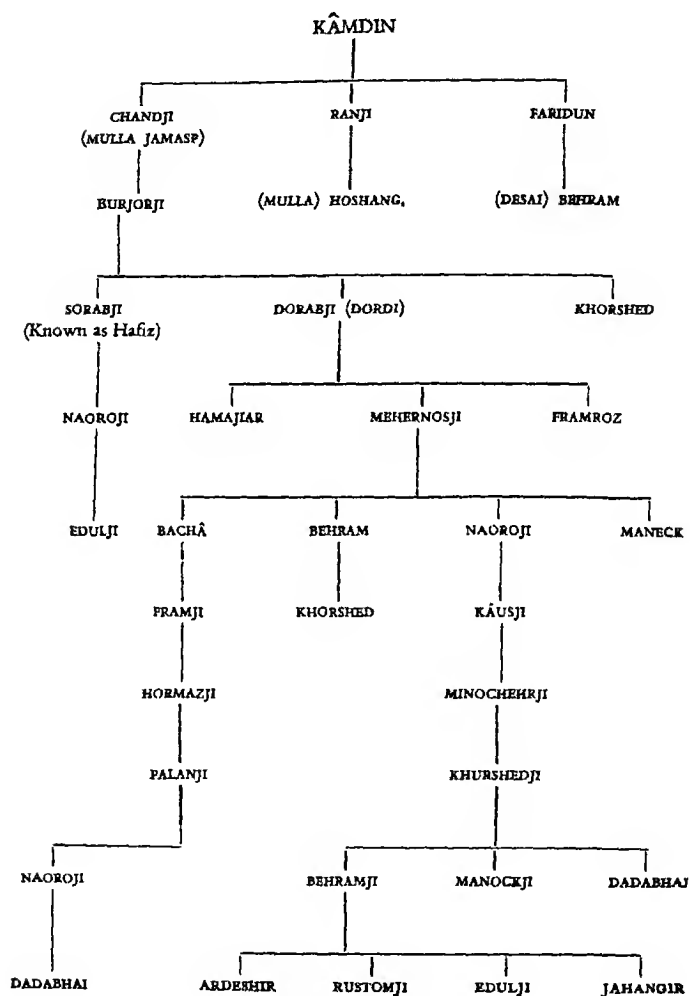
Mulla Jamasp was a direct descendant of Zarthost Mobed, who settled in Navsari about the year 1201, and Dadabhai was the ninth in descent from Mulla Jamasp.<sup>1</sup> His parents lived in comparative poverty, but his ancestors appear to have seen better days. The names of some of the Dordis figure with those of the elders of the Parsi community in communal records, which show that Dadabhai's impulse for patriotic service had its roots in his ancestry. Mehernosji Dordi rose to the position of an *akabar*, or leader, not only of the Parsi fraternity of Navsari, but also of the whole population of the place. Mehernosji's eldest son, Bachaji, was one of a mission of five famous Parsis of the time, who visited the Gackwar's headquarters at Songadh in 1740, as a result of which the fire-temple of the Parsis was removed to Udwada, where it remains to this day.

Mehernosji's second son, Behramji, was at one time the richest man in Navsari. He was, however, robbed during one of the raids of the Pindaris, which were common in those days, of all the bars of gold he had concealed in the basement of his residence. He died broken-hearted the same day. Another ancestor of the family, Sorabji Burjorji, was well known in Navsari as Hafiz, the title conferred on men versed in scriptural lore. This shows that the family was renowned for learning also, while its connexion with the celebrated Desai family of Navsari bespeaks its high social status.

A curious origin has been suggested of the family name Dordi. One day some Parsi priests of Navsari went to a dinner. An ancestor of Dadabhai's family, Behramji Mehernosji, turned up rather late and tried to conceal himself, or, according to another account, perambulated the place in search of a seat. One of the

<sup>1</sup> Vide genealogical table, p. 24.

# MULLA JAMASP'S LINE OF DESCENT



company thereupon ejaculated, "Why are you twisting and turning like a *dordi* (rope made of coir<sup>1</sup>)?" Thereafter the name stuck to the man and his descendants. According to the local account, this nickname was given to Behramji in the year 1764, but the family records show that he had been gathered to his forefathers long before that date. There is a confusion of names and dates in the traditional account. Perhaps the name was given to some other headstrong member of the family for his inflexibility of decision and tenacity of purpose, qualities which the hero of our story inherited and displayed in an eminent degree.

"Maharaj," said Dadabhai once to Mulharrao Gaekwar when pressed to do what he, as his Prime Minister, thought would cause more harm than good, "my name is 'Dordi.' You know, Your Highness, that you may burn a *dordi*, but can never take the twist out of it. So is it with me. When once I form a decision, nothing will dislodge me from it."

A striking illustration of such courage of conviction and determination was his stupendous struggle to enter the House of Commons. It was the most romantic dream of his life; the chances for its fruition seemed extremely slender, but Dadabhai carried on his election campaign for seven years, undeterred by the coldness or antagonism of friend or foe and undismayed by repeated reverses. After his first failure to win the suffrages of the electors of the Holborn division of Finsbury, in the year 1886, he nursed the Central Finsbury constituency for five years in spite of the opposition of the executive of his own Liberal Party. When he appeared to be leading a forlorn hope, W. A. Chambers, one of the British friends most keenly interested in Dadabhai's success, called on him. This liberal-minded Englishman, who was a member of a leading firm of civil engineers and architects in Bombay and was well known for his active sympathy with India in her struggle for freedom, was also a voter in Central Finsbury. In the course of their conversation concerning the attitude of the officials of the Liberal Party, Dadabhai warmed up

<sup>1</sup> Tamil *kayiru* from *Kāyiru*, to be twisted

and said: "They think they can keep down the mild Hindu, but I will teach them a lesson. I will stick to this constituency." He did, indeed, stick to it and conquered.

There are no nursery annals to entertain us with the details of Dadabhai's childhood. Whether he was an infant prodigy maturing into brilliant boyhood, we have no evidence to show. All that we know is that little Dady had the misfortune to lose his father when he was only four years old. "One of the first fancies which took possession of my mind as a little child," he tells us, "was that, as my father was dead, the moon, like other friends, was in sympathy with me. And whether I went to the front or back of the house, the moon always seemed to go with me. I liked sympathy then, and like it now."

His gifted mother, however, supplied to a large extent the want of a father's care and protection. It was in India an age of ignorance and submerged womanhood, but her natural intelligence was remarkable. She was, as he used to recall in later days, his constant companion, nurse, teacher, guardian-angel, all in one, and continued to be the good genius of his life for over fifty years. The shadow of adversity hung over the little household; nevertheless she sent him to school and toiled for his maintenance. Thanks to her diligence and care, he escaped unscathed from the contaminating influences of his environment. In a brief account of his early life, which he contributed to "The Days of My Youth" column of T. P. O'Connor's journal *M.A.P.*, in the year 1904, he observed:

There is one who, if she comes last in this narrative, has ever been first of all, my mother. Widowed when I, her only child, was an infant, she voluntarily remained a widow, wrapped up in me, her everything in the world. She worked for her child, helped by a brother. Although illiterate, and although all love for me, she was a wise mother. She kept a firm hand upon me. She was the wise counsellor of the neighbourhood. She helped me with all her heart in my work for female education and other social reforms against prejudices of the day. *She made me what I am.*

In the same account he gives us a few more glimpses of his childhood. That being the only chapter of autobiography left by him, it seems best to draw on it freely to complete this narrative of those early days.

How things, little in themselves, lead to important results! In the early twenties of the last century there was formed at Bombay a society called the "Native Education Society," which established a school in two branches, English and vernacular. The *Mehtaji* (master) of my indigenous school did not know very much about the experiment of the Native Education Society. But it was enough for him that it was conducted under Government auspices. So he sent his son to the school and persuaded my mother to send me also, and this was the foundation of my whole life's career. The education was then entirely free. Had there been levied the fees of the present day, my mother would not have been able to pay them. This incident made me an ardent advocate of free education and of the principle that every child should have the opportunity of receiving all the education it is capable of assimilating, whether it is born poor or with a silver spoon in its mouth.

Being quick at multiplication tables and at mental arithmetic, and being also little of size and fair of colour, I was a regular "exhibition boy" at my indigenous or native school. On special occasions all the boys of the school used to be lined up in the open by the side of the road, and there, surrounded by crowds of people, I, along with other little boys, was smartly exercised in mental gymnastics amid the loud *wawas* (cries of bravo) of the admiring audience.

Owing to the fairness of my complexion, and, I think I may say, the prettiness of my little limbs, I was also always an object of show at weddings, processions, etc., generally appearing as an English general or admiral or in some gorgeous Indian Royal or Court dress brocade. Fond parents and friends of the child thus exhibited used to say of him: "Oh, he is my dear *Jonglo* (Englishman)!" Little did I dream then that I should spend much of my manhood and older life in the country of the *Jonglos* and don their dress in reality. I was particularly reminded of these days of processions and my childish joy in the different dresses I wore,



especially the English Court dress, when, in Court dress, I formed one of the deputation from the committee of the Imperial Institute, who received the late Queen Victoria on the occasion of the opening of that building. I well remember how the thought passed through my mind: "Here I am, a real courtier now!"

When I entered the school, there were two European masters—one for the literary, the other for the arithmetic, department. Some difference of opinion having arisen between them, they divided the school into two parts, each taking the whole education of his own division. One of the two was a strict disciplinarian, the other anything but that. My lot fell with the latter. Practically we were allowed to do as we liked, but I was not disposed to be idle. I must be active in some way or the other. There was no enforcement of lessons, so I looked about for an occupation. I had a retentive memory and could repeat any story I heard both in spirit and in letter, and I was full of stories. So most of my school hours were passed in "spinning yarns" to an admiring circle of school-fellows. So lax was discipline that often we would coolly march out of school and spend the whole day in games. In this way something like a year of regular study was lost to me. Yet I cannot say that even that truant year did not do me some good. My story-telling powers and skill at games made me a leader among the boys, and I acquired the self-confidence and reliance which comes with such a position.

As a boy I took a great interest in, and was considered pretty smart at, Indian cricket (*gilli-danda*). In the pursuit of that active and absorbing game we boys did not in the least seem to mind the hot sun, and during the half-hour for lunch at midday we used to play regularly on the Esplanade.

In the streets of great cities one's ears are not infrequently assailed by foul language. Dadabhai's soul shrank with horror from it.

Another incident of my childhood I give upon my mother's authority and not from personal recollection. According to my mother, whenever any boy used bad language to me, I used to reply, "Your bad words will remain in your mouth."

The awakening of the soul came to me when I was about

fifteen. I remember, as if it were only yesterday, how at a certain spot on a certain road I made a vow never to use low language. From that time forward, as my education advanced, other resolutions to do this and not to do that followed, and I think I may say that I faithfully adhered to them.

Happy the man who can thus lay his hand on his heart and claim fidelity to his better self! The following startling story gives an idea of the unwholesomeness of the general surroundings.

As a boy I was accustomed to have my little drink before dinner. One day, there was no liquor in the house, and I was sent to have my drink at a shop opposite. Never did I forget the shame and humiliation I felt at being there. It was enough. The drink shop never saw my face again.

In another reminiscence he tells us how at a school exhibition he deprived a jackdaw of his borrowed feathers.

I remember at one of the school examinations a fellow-pupil, having learned the "ready-reckoner" by heart, carried off the prize I had expected. But at the distribution of prizes, when questions outside the book were asked, he faltered and broke down. I seized the opportunity, rushed out of the ranks, and answered. There and then an English gentleman among the company gave me a prize, and Mrs. Postans, the lady traveller, who was also present, has made a special note of the incident in her book *Western India*.

In this book Mrs. Postans described Dadabhai as a little Parsi lad "with an overhanging forehead and small sparkling eyes," which "peculiarly attracted attention." "The moment a question was proposed to the class," she writes, "he quickly took a step before the rest, contracted his brows in deep and anxious thought and with parted lips and fingers eagerly uplifted towards the master, rapidly worked his problem and blurted out the solution with a startling haste. The little fellow seemed wholly animated with a desire of excelling, and his mental capabilities promised him a rich reward."

One wonders if "the little fellow" would have risen or fallen

in the estimation of this lady if she had been told that on his tiny shoulders he was carrying the burden of a married man! Infant marriages were then a rule among Parsis. The earlier the age at which a mother succeeded in securing a husband for her girl, the greater was her exultation. Marriages were even arranged, in rare cases, in anticipation of the birth of a bride or bridegroom, and Dadabhai would have been a good-for-nothing fellow had his mother failed to secure a wife for him before he was in his teens. So we find him married during his eleventh year to Gulbai, daughter of Sorabji Shroff, aged seven.

## CHAPTER II

### “THE PROMISE OF INDIA”

IT was a critical hour for the advanced students of Dadabhai's school when Assistant Professor Bal Gangadhar Shastree visited it to select half a dozen boys for a new college class. Young Dady felt his fate trembling in the balance. Although he was the brightest boy of the class, he was put very near the bottom. The teacher of the class had a partiality for the sons of rich people, a common failing of school-masters of that type. Poor as he was, Dady could not stand it. It was not in his nature to conceal resentment; he often rebelled against such injustice, but it made matters worse for him. Bal Gangadhar, however, picked him out with unerring judgment and pronounced him fit for the higher form. Thereafter he toiled on, winning academic laurels which culminated in his appointment as Professor of Mathematics.

Among the educational institutions which revolutionized the life and thought of the people of the Bombay Presidency during the nineteenth century none was more conspicuous than the Elphinstone Institution, popularly known as the *Sisoti* (Society's) School, and among the distinguished *Sisoti* boys who powerfully stimulated the activities of the people of India and transformed their ideals of national life none was more prominent than Dadabhai. The genesis of this institution throws some light on the conditions under which Dadabhai received his early education.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century India was steeped in ignorance. Only in a few nooks and corners the lamp of knowledge was dimly lit. The rulers of the country were so engrossed in the work of consolidating the conquered territories that they had no time to think of the immediate intellectual wants of the people or of the danger inherent in the ignorance of the multitude.

It is astonishing how backward, until recently, was British educational policy. There was no public grant-in-aid for education in England until 1834; no educational enactment of any real importance until the year 1870. Even then England would probably have remained inactive, had not the Prussian victories in the Franco-German War demonstrated to the world the immense advantage of an educated rank and file.

Such innate conservatism may account for the indifference of the early authorities; but another factor also appears to have encouraged the policy of inaction pursued during the regime of the East India Company. This was the conflict between self-interest and duty, the conflict of interests of the people with those of their alien rulers, which was to be the theme of hundreds of Dadabhai's orations and appeals to British statesmen. Should the torch of knowledge and liberty be kindled in those regions, would there not be a growing demand for more light and more freedom until the subject people were acknowledged to be fit for self-government and allowed to throw off the yoke of an alien ascendency? The Directors of the East India Company, therefore, looked upon the educational efforts of Christian missionaries with grave misgivings and warned their satrap, the Marquis of Hastings, that such activities would give rise to political aspirations which might jeopardize the rule of the Company. Lord Hastings, however, manfully replied that it would be a betrayal of national morality to perpetuate ignorance for the sake of sordid political considerations.

Very little, however, was done by the State for the furtherance of that object. Consequently, during the days of Dadabhai's infancy, education in Bombay was a haphazard affair. There was not a single Government school in the City. The benevolent missionary bodies and the Bombay Education Society conducted a few schools on Western lines, and their work was supplemented by indigenous schools owned and run by penurious *mehtajis*, who held their classes on the verandahs of houses. Chairs and tables were unknown; slates and pencils were novelties; the student carried with him a portable *patti*, or a piece of wood, on which

he traced the letters of the alphabet and numerals with a reed pen dipped in a chalky fluid. Sweeping the school premises in the morning and doing household work for the teacher formed part of the curriculum—a striking recognition of the place of manual training in the scheme of elementary education!

The origin of school sports in Bombay is generally traced to the game of *gilli-danda*, the game which Dadabhai used to describe in England as “Indian cricket.” Perhaps we may also trace the early beginning of school gymnastics to the indigenous modes of enforcing discipline, which prevailed in the schools until the closing years of the last century. To be on the rack from morning to evening, or to kneel on pebbles for hours together with their fingers touching the toes and with a heavy stone balanced on the back, as a punishment for some trivial offence, was the lot of almost all the students. Nor was it an uncommon incident to see some of the more refractory boys swung across the beams in the class-room with a rope round their bodies. Just underneath a large quantity of grass was spread and ignited; and in that position the young pupils of the stern martinets of the day had to manœuvre as best they could to protect their bodies from being scorched.

While Dadabhai was yet an infant, a great educational movement was set on foot in Bombay. Mountstuart Elphinstone, who was then Governor of Bombay, was an ardent advocate of education. Although the prevailing official view was against Western education, and Macaulay had not yet raised his powerful voice in favour of teaching European sciences to Indians through the medium of English, this distinguished administrator sympathized with the aspirations of a few Indians for promoting higher education among the people. The Native Education Society was established under his patronage and received his constant support. When he retired in 1827, the Princes and the people of India raised a large sum for perpetuating his memory by the foundation of “professorships for teaching the youths of the country the languages, literature, sciences, and moral philosophy of Europe.”

The college classes were subsequently amalgamated with the

school classes conducted by the Native Education Society, and the combined school and college, named the Elphinstone Institution, was placed under the control of a Board. This was the college where Dadabhai was taught by Professors Bell, Harkness, Henderson, Orlebar, and Reid. Of life at the institution there is, however, no record. Neither Dadabhai nor any of his contemporaries has told us what subjects were then taught, what methods were in vogue, whether politics were forbidden ground, whether the professors mixed freely with the boys, what their idiosyncrasies were, what impressions were made by them on the plastic minds of the first batch of students who joined the college classes, what traces of each one's personality were left in the hearts of their pupils. We gather, however, from the reports of the Institution that Professor Bell taught Mathematics and Natural Science, Professor Henderson History, and Professor Harkness English Literature and Philosophy. In his reminiscences of old Bombay, Sir Dinsha Wacha says that he had heard that those early professors were "most excellent in their own branches of knowledge." Harkness was "an Aberdeen man, Scotch to the backbone and Scotch in his broad accents, besides a man of stern discipline. He was hot-tempered and often used to fly into a rage. But age had mellowed him, specially in his later days before he retired in 1862." On his retirement, the grateful Elphinstonians of the day voted him a marble bust, which now adorns the Framji Cowasji Institute Hall in Bombay.

Here, then, Dadabhai learnt to commune with the best minds in the realm of literature. Here all that was noble in him was illumined by the study of the life and labours of the heroes of the world. Here dawned on him, while he was yet in his teens, the consciousness of the debt he owed to society. Among the books he read we find the pride of place given to the great Persian epic, Firdawsi's *Shahnama*. Another favourite book, a constant companion, was a Gujarati treatise, *The Duties of Zoroastrians*, the burden of which was pure thought, pure speech, pure deed.

But (says he) the literature I had most to do with and most enjoyed was, of course, English. Watt's *Improvement of the Mind*

settled my style and mode of thought—never two words when one was enough, clearness of thought and diction. So I bade farewell to the fine and flowery.

This made him an orator and an author always comprehensible to the simplest minds.

As education advanced (he adds) thought gradually developed itself in different directions. I realized that I had been educated at the expense of the poor, to whom I myself belonged, so much so that some of my school books came from a well-to-do class-mate, a Cama, one of the family with whom I was destined subsequently to have so much to do in public and private life. The thought developed itself in my mind that, as my education and all the benefits arising therefrom came from the people, I must return to them the best I had in me. I must devote myself to the service of the people. . . .

In the year 1840 Dadabhai received the Clare Scholarship; two years later he was admitted to the newly opened class of Normal Scholars. There was another Parsi scholar, Kavasji Edulji Masani, who shared with him the honour of being the earliest to be admitted to that class, the highest rung of the academic ladder in those days. Both were close comrades until their paths fell apart; both were great at mathematics, but in his mastery of natural philosophy and political economy Dadabhai stood unrivalled.

Among his other fellow-students was Bomonji Pestonji Master, who worked for some time with Dadabhai and Kavasji Masani as a teacher in the Elphinstone School and afterwards distinguished himself as a member of the Municipal Corporation of Bombay, reputed for his wit and humour. Another companion was Kavasji Edulji Khambatta, known for the felicity of diction which marked his contributions to the English columns of the *Rast Goftar*, the progressive journal started by Dadabhai.

During those happy college days Dadabhai was the shining light of the Elphinstone Institution, the pride of his professors and fellow-students. In appearance he was handsome, with singularly



bright eyes; in his movements agile and alert; in character and demeanour, upright and estimable. Academic honours crowned his career, giving unmistakable indication of remarkable vigour of intellect and clearness of thought and judgment. His teachers were not slow to discern in him the lineaments of the man—the perfect gentleman and the high-souled patriot that he was to be. Professor Orlebar called him “The Promise of India.” No prophecy made by a professor was more thoroughly justified by subsequent events. “The Promise of India” was to be the first in many fields—the first Indian professor, the first to found several organizations for the social, intellectual, and political uplift of the people of India, the first Indian M.P., the first Indian to sit on a Royal Commission, appointed in response to his own demands to secure financial justice for his country, and, above all, the first and foremost Indian to claim self-government for his countrymen.

When Mountstuart Elphinstone was seeing the vision of a self-governing India as the inevitable and glorious result of the policy he had been advocating of educating Indians and associating them in the administration of their country, little could he have dreamt that a boy had already been born to hasten the day for the transfer of power to the people, the day which he was placing “at an immeasurable distance.”

In his student days Dadabhai saw his motherland sleeping, unconscious of her wrongs, unmindful of her rights; it was his destiny to stir her slowly but steadily, day after day, to a sense of her true status among the civilized countries of the world and, in the evening of his life, to see her running on the tracks laid by him.

### CHAPTER III

## “DADABHAI PROFESSOR”

LUCKY the lad whose academic career could dazzle not only his professors but also the Chief Justice of the day. Dadabhai had that good fortune. His work as a brilliant student came constantly to the notice of Sir Erskine Perry, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bombay, who happened to be the President of the Board of Education. He suggested that Dadabhai should be sent to England to qualify himself as a barrister. It needed, however, quite a fortune to carry out the project, whereas Dadabhai and his mother did not seem to possess between them a hundred rupee note. His good uncle, Rustamji Desai, maintained them, but neither he nor any other relative could give or lend him the money required for the purpose. Hearing this, the large-hearted judge offered to contribute half the expenses himself, provided the other half was borne by the elders of the Parsi community.

Gifted with quick intelligence and the aptitude of a terse debater, fluent and forceful in speech and patient and persevering in action, Dadabhai would have been an ornament to the Bar and the Bench, had his lot been cast that way. He himself eagerly looked forward to such a career but was doomed to disappointment. The proposal of the Chief Justice was at first welcomed by some of the leaders of the community, particularly by the liberal-minded Camas, who were the pioneers of social reform and patrons of education in Bombay, but it fell through because the orthodox among them scented disaster in that generous offer.

Conversion of the heathen appears to take a secondary place among the beneficent activities of the saintly souls who now preach the Word of God in the East. Their predecessors,

however, were particularly keen on proselytism as the primary object of their mission. To break through the citadel of Hinduism was not a very difficult task for them, but the staunch followers of Zoroaster, who had abandoned their homes and sought refuge in India, for the preservation of their faith, could not think of any calamity more appalling than the renunciation of the ancient creed by even a single soul. They, therefore, took special care to guard Parsi youths from the snares of the missionary. No Christian evangelist could hope to enter their sanctuary. Nevertheless, a few of the more ardent missionaries, of whom Dr. John Wilson was the most prominent, ventured to cast covetous eyes on some of the schoolboys. The method of these zealous followers of the Cross was simple—for one hour given to Christianity a gift of four hours' English, History, Geography, and Mathematics. At last, in the year 1839, they succeeded in inducing two lads, Dhanjibhoy Naoroji and Hormusji Pestonji, to embrace Christianity. Nothing ever convulsed the Parsis more, or caused them greater chagrin and humiliation, than these two solitary cases of conversion. The whole community was up in arms. The missionaries were anathematized as "devils in human shape"; and brochures denouncing Christianity were written as tracts for the times.

So bitterly were the feelings of the community outraged that a disturbance of the peace was apprehended. It was alleged that the Parsi leaders were inciting their followers to violence and scheming to get forcible possession of the two lads, "with the ulterior object of sending them to Navsari and there terminating their existence." Thereupon they sent a representation to Government affirming their earnest desire to prevent any disturbance. They had appealed to the tribunal of justice and as law-abiding people they were willing to bow to its decision. The law, however, could not give them relief, inasmuch as the boys had come of age. This kept the embers of controversy smouldering for years, and it made the creed-bound Zoroastrian fight shy of anything savouring of Christianity.

In course of time, however, the Parsis were reconciled to

the work of the missionaries, and they marked their appreciation of it by liberal donations to the missions. They even looked upon the two converts with respect when they had taken Holy Orders and had become Christian priests. The Rev. Dhanjibhoy died in England in the year 1905. When the cables announced the death of “D. Naoroji,” people thought the Grand Old Man of India had passed away.

When Sir Erskine Perry proposed to send Dadabhai to England, six years had elapsed since the conversion of the Parsi youths, but the passions roused by that incident had not yet spent their force. Orthodox Parsis would have nothing to do with anything English. It was, therefore, impossible for the leaders of the community to accept the proposal. On his retirement, Sir Erskine was appointed a member of the India Council. Dadabhai was then in England, engrossed in the study of problems of far greater importance than Law and unconsciously qualifying himself as an advocate to plead the cause of India before the bar of the British public. “It is as well my proposal was not accepted,” said the ex-judge to him one day at the India Office, “as I am sure that your life has been of more public service than if you had become a lawyer.”

For the time being, however, it seemed as if Dadabhai had lost a golden opportunity. The humble chair of “Head Native Assistant-Master” of the Elphinstone School was all that could be offered to him on the completion of his academic career. By that time, however, he had come perilously near the portals of the Government Secretariat. The Secretary to the Board of Education had secured for him an appointment in the Bombay Secretariat. Dadabhai was on the point of accepting it, but, fortunately, sage advice of some of the professors saved him from a post where he would have been bound down to the narrow outlook of a subordinate official.

The Assistant Master’s place was a stepping-stone to the Assistant Professorship of Mathematics. Referring to the appointment in their Report for the year 1850-51, the Board of Edu-

cation spoke of him as "one of the most experienced as well as able men ever educated within the walls of the Institution." They expressed the hope that he would continue his career with the same single-minded straightforwardness of purpose which had hitherto characterized him. "Go on in the same, steady, straightforward course, and with the same single-minded views," wrote Dr. Stovell, Secretary to the Board of Education, "and you may prove in time a great blessing to your countrymen."

Two years later, Dadabhai was appointed Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. It was the first professorship ever held by an Indian in any prominent college in the country. The appointment, therefore, attracted more attention in those days than that of a Minister does at the present time. It was regarded as a fitting recognition of the Indian intellect, and it made Dadabhai's countrymen feel some inches taller. The Board of Education made a special reference to it in their Report for the year 1854-55. "We feel sure," they observed, "that the distinction he has thus won by a long and laborious devotion to mathematical studies and by an able discharge of his duties in the Institution will stimulate him to still greater exertions."

The enthusiasm with which the public hailed the appointment was shared by Government. They congratulated the Board of Education on having seen in the honourable distinction conferred on Dadabhai a fulfilment of the hope expressed by the founders of the Professorships, nearly thirty years ago. Dadabhai considered it the greatest event in his career. Down to the end of his life he felt proud of that distinction. "Several honours came to me during my lifetime," said he on one occasion, "but no other title created in me that sense of pride which I felt in being known as a Professor." On another occasion, when, as a member of the House of Commons, he was at the zenith of his fame, he wrote, "To me it is the dearest title and honour. It is my delight, and many a school-fellow and pupil call me 'Dadabhai Professor' to this day."

To be a professor, to mould the mind of youth and age alike, to be the preceptor not only of his pupils but of all the two

hundred and fifty million people of India and, in a sense, of those in authority over them, was the destiny for which “The Promise of India” had been marked out. On that account, perhaps, he was turned aside from the by-ways to which he was lured by well-meaning friends, who could not then have dreamt of the position he was to occupy amongst the nation-builders of the world. Subsequently, the forces of destiny conspired to terminate his career as a professor and to take him to another country, 6,000 miles away, where the great work of his life for the freedom of his motherland was to be accomplished.

Before, however, we cross the seas with him, let us have a glance at the record of his work as Professor in the Elphinstone Institute. How many students are befogged in their school and college days by the mysteries of mathematics! As this subject was also the stumbling-block of a large majority of Dadabhai's pupils, he did his best to make it as interesting to them as possible and to infuse in them his own love and enthusiasm for the science. Those who were specially weak in the subject were asked to sit with him after college hours, and he took keen delight in solving their difficulties. This, however, was not all. Accustomed to do everything thoroughly, he saw how necessary it was that the foundations of instruction in that abstruse subject should be laid in the lower classes on scientific lines. He, therefore, set about improving the teaching of the subject in the lower classes and undertook the work of supervision of the mathematical classes of the school division, in addition to his own duties. He also conducted periodical examinations of the classes and issued reports bringing to light the merits or demerits of individual teachers. So systematically did he carry out this work that Principal Harkness specially eulogized his efforts in his report on the work of the Institution for the year 1853-54. “In Mr. Dadabhai's report and tables of results,” he observed, “will be shown the work of the year in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in the hands of an intelligent and zealous Native Professor, who has for many years devoted himself to this department.”

To what extent the Professor's love for mathematics moulded his life and character and influenced his code of ethics it is difficult to say. It will, however, be seen, as the story of his life is unfolded, that mathematical precision was the keynote not only of his private conduct and judgment but also of his political conduct and of the public agitation he led. Nothing less than a demonstrative proof could make him accept a statement; nothing short of what was just and fair could give him satisfaction. Similarly, all his complaints against the rulers resolved themselves into the indictment that they were not governing India on principles precisely British. All his demands on behalf of India were simply appeals for a precise and just interpretation of and adherence to declarations solemnly made by the Crown and British statesmen.

Many of Dadabhai's pupils, who subsequently held high positions in life, spoke admiringly of his efficiency as a teacher and his solicitude for his pupils. None who came under his spell could forget his winning simplicity, charm of manner, and unfailing courtesy. None could forget the debt of gratitude he owed to so gifted and kind-hearted a teacher for his advice and guidance. His most distinguished pupil, Ramkrishna Bhandarkar, who subsequently made a name for himself as the greatest Orientalist in India, often used to say that it was impossible to forget Dadabhai's "masterly teaching and kindness to students." Simple in manners and habits himself, he impressed upon his pupils the dignity of simplicity and weaned a good many of them, by his own example, from their weakness for ostentation.

The spirit of the reformer was, however, still more conspicuous in his work, during those early years, as a pioneer of social reform and a leader of thought in Bombay City and Presidency.

## CHAPTER IV

### STANDARD-BEARER OF REFORM

IT used to be said, until recently, that Hindu social reform was "a Himalaya to cut." Using the same metaphor, one may say that during Dadabhai's days Zoroastrian social reform was an Elburz to pierce. While the Himalaya remained unpierced during the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Herculean task of cutting through the Elburz chain was courageously essayed by a handful of Elphinstonians of whom the most conspicuous was Dadabhai.

During those days a Native Literary Society existed in Bombay, where the merits of "the dire Hannibal," the guilt of Brutus, and the greatness of Caesar formed themes of animated discussion. It was, however, in a moribund condition during the year 1848. Some of its members, therefore, assembled in the hall of the Elphinstone Institution, under the presidency of Dadabhai, to inaugurate a new society, which they named "Students' Literary and Scientific Society." Professor Patton was appointed President, and Dadabhai Treasurer, of the Society. One of the rules of the new organization provided that two members should be nominated by the Secretary, according to their order in the list of members, as readers of papers on literary, scientific, or social subjects for each fortnightly meeting. Another rule laid down that any member who failed to read a paper should, in the first instance, be fined a rupee. The fine was to be doubled for the second offence; and expulsion was the penalty for the third offence. The intention evidently was to weed out useless and ornamental members. All political or religious subjects were strictly excluded. It is amusing to find Dadabhai submitting to this self-denying ordinance, but it shows that social reform was regarded as the question of supreme importance.



Each question was first discussed at the Society's meetings; the opinions formed by the members were then placed before the public through two vernacular branches of the Society, the Gujarati *Dnyan Prasarak Mandali*, of which Dadabhai was Chairman, and the Marathi *Dnyan Prasarak Mandali*. The debates of the Gujarati Society were published in its journal, *Dnyan Prasarak*, which was edited by Dadabhai for several years. To him it was a labour of love, but when he had not enough leisure for the work, he paid others to do it.

August 4, 1849, was the proudest day in the annals of the Society. It will also be remembered in the history of the Bombay Presidency as the day on which was laid the foundation of female education in the city of Bombay. For men there was little at home in those days to inspire or cheer. Domestic happiness, "the nurse of virtue," was unknown to many. No wonder several of them were driven to seek pleasure outside the home. The only remedy lay in educating women. On many an occasion the young Elphinstonians had waxed eloquent on this subject, but nothing practical had been achieved. On that memorable day, however, a paper on female education, read by Behramji Kharshedji Gandhi, led to a discussion which took a practical turn.

The essay was brimful of enthusiasm. Behramji submitted that they had talked enough. Deeds were wanted, not words; he exhorted his colleagues to do something. This appeal, followed by a prayer to the Almighty in impressive Parsi style, met with a hearty response.

"Let every student here present use his influence with the members of his own family to get one pupil at least."

"Yes," responded scores of voices.

"Let us teach the students ourselves, and show that we are in earnest."

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed all.

This was not a new suggestion for Dadabhai. When asked by his grandchildren to tell them some stories of his early days, Dadabhai often related to them how, when he was a college

student, he used to go round from house to house, with a friend (whose name none can now recall), persuading parents and guardians to allow them to sit on their verandahs and to teach the three R's to their girls, how some of them had taken advantage of his offer and how two or three irate fathers had threatened to throw them down the steps for making such a preposterous proposal.

A resolution was adopted by the meeting for opening experimental schools. There was no need to raise funds; several members volunteered to act as teachers and others offered apartments in their houses for opening schools. It was decided to conduct the classes from seven to ten in the morning so that the professional work of the volunteers might not suffer.

A great difficulty, however, remained to be surmounted. The school-rooms were there; the teachers were there; the books and materials were there; but where were the pupils? Should the young men lecture before empty benches? To capture a pupil was for them almost as difficult a task as to conquer a city, for against them were arrayed the forces of stern orthodoxy with their misgivings as to the consequences of such a movement on the social life of the people. Selfless and single-minded devotion to the cause, however, worked wonders. Within a couple of months 44 pupils were secured for the Parsi schools, and 24 for the Hindu schools. In all, there were seven schools, three Hindu and four Parsi. Dadabhai was in charge of the Baharkote School. Being a trained teacher, he was a pillar of strength to his colleagues. They did everything in their power to make the experiment a success, as mentioned in the first report of the Society:

The prudence and caution which these youthful reformers displayed in applying themselves to the laborious details of their self-imposed task were as admirable as the generous enthusiasm which sustained them throughout its performance. Carefully did they prepare themselves for their duties by reading every work on practical education within their reach, and by holding frequent meetings to consider how they might best instruct the children that were entrusted to their care.

Some of the leaders were not slow to appreciate such work. Jugannath Shankarsheth, who was for many years a member of the Board of Education, gave a beautiful little cottage to be used as a school-house, an example which was soon followed by other advocates of female education. Among them the most eager and generous were four Parsis, who by their timely donations rendered it possible for the Society to engage the services of paid teachers. They would not have their names disclosed, but it transpired later that they were all members of the Cama family. One of them was Kharshedji Nasarwanji Cama, who was particularly friendly to Dadabhai and was subsequently responsible for transporting him from the class-room to the counting-house. These donors placed at the Society's disposal a sum sufficient for the maintenance of the schools, whether Hindu or Parsi, for a period of two years. It was hoped that at the end of the period the public would not let the movement languish for want of funds.

When paid teachers were engaged, the volunteers formed themselves into a board of supervision. Dadabhai undertook to supervise the Fort Schools and threw himself into the work as enthusiastically as he did in later life into the momentous struggles for the emancipation of the country. With exemplary regularity he visited and examined the classes, and assisted the tutorial staff in ensuring the best results. The Government of Lord Falkland regarded the spontaneous organization of these schools "as an epoch in the history of education in the Bombay Presidency, from which, it was hoped, would in due time be traced the commencement of a rapid, marked, and constant progress."

It must not, however, be supposed that the course of female education thenceforth ran smooth. Far from it. The orthodox were never weary of prophesying the total breakdown of society under the regime of the New Woman. Against those prophets of ill the reformers had to wage a long crusade. An amusing incident may be noted. In October 1852 Sir Erskine Perry suggested the appointment of a Committee consisting of women for superintending the girls' schools and for suggesting improvements. A

Committee of a few European women was accordingly formed, but the announcement of the project aroused strong opposition. The *Chabuk* (*Whip*) could only see in it an attempt to introduce "English language and English manners." Was it at all improbable that under the influence of those Western women young girls would desire to make slaves of their husbands? "If they cannot succeed in this," the paper prophesied, "they will drag them into courts of justice to make a display of their talents, their culture, and the power they shall have acquired by their knowledge." The facetious editor portrayed a vision of Judgment: Sir Erskine Perry on the Bench, expecting, with ill-concealed malignity, the arrival of a luckless husband whom his termagant spouse, shouting, "Knowledge is Power," hurried into court to answer her claim for separate maintenance. Thus, for the time being, the adroit satirist succeeded in smothering the project.

Thanks, however, to the efforts of the *Sisoti* boys, the lamp of knowledge illumined year after year an ever-widening area. True to its name, the *Dnyan Prasarak Mandali* also systematically spread the rays of knowledge far and wide. At the meetings of the Gujarati and the Marathi Societies lectures on useful subjects were delivered before large gatherings. Within a few years almost every topic of popular science was lectured upon, with demonstrations. Social questions also attracted large audiences. The effect was visible in the gradual transformation of ideas and customs among the people.

With the foundations of social reform thus laid, the Parsi reformers raised their voice in defence of the purity of their religion. After their flight from Iran, Parsis had lived in India with Hindus and Muhammadans for twelve centuries. As an inevitable consequence of such prolonged contact, certain alien beliefs, practices, and ceremonies had crept into the Zoroastrian creed. The *Sisoti* boys declined to accept such a medley as representing the pure gospel of Zarathushtra, but it was not so easy to convert the orthodox to their views. Their ancestors had cherished those beliefs and observed the customs for several generations; what

was good for their elders was good for them; what right had those raw youths to consider themselves wiser than their forebears?

Some of those customs were so pernicious that in earlier days even the Council of Elders, the Parsi *Panchayat*, had condemned them. It was not, however, possible to eradicate beliefs and usages which had held the community in bondage for centuries. The priests alone could have succeeded in bringing about a religious revival, but they had openly rebelled against the edicts of the *Panchayat*. Were they to submit to the dictates of those "striplings"? Yet reform was in the air. In religious movements, power and authority seldom carry the masses, but where compulsion fails, persuasion works wonders. The hope and strength of the reformers lay in persuasion and persistent appeal to the good sense of the people.

Once more, therefore, we find Dadabhai busy organizing a Society to carry out this object. With the co-operation of Naoroji Furdoonji, the "Tribune of the people" as he was called, he succeeded in founding, on August 3, 1851, the *Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha*, or "Guides on the Mazdayasnan path." Naoroji Furdoonji was appointed President and Dadabhai Secretary. The avowed object of the Society was to expound the true tenets of the Zoroastrian creed, to take off the wrappings, to discover the vital and essential elements, and to restore the ancient religion to its pristine purity. Orthodox Parsis would not believe it. What guarantee was there that, in their zeal to uproot alien practices, the reformers would not lay irreverent hands on the usages and customs of Zoroastrianism itself? Reason once let loose might not rest satisfied with demolishing alien usages and erroneous conclusions deduced from scriptural data, but might eventually attack the data themselves. What could, then, deter the reformers from transforming the old faith according to their Western ideas?

Parsis are, at times, a puzzle to their neighbours. Their virtues lie very close to their weaknesses. The same sterling qualities that contribute towards their intellectual progress drag them down to the abyss of unreasoning orthodoxy. The same ardour and

tenacity with which they cling to their religion, bind them closely to their prejudices. The same lavishness with which they run to the succour of suffering humanity distinguishes them in the persecution of those whom they regard, during the wild excitement of the moment, as enemies of their faith. The opponents of the reform party were certainly not found stinting in the abuse that they heaped on the devoted heads of its members. Upon the President and the Secretary devolved the burden of meeting the mad fury that they had aroused. Both stood valiantly firm and conquered.

Of all the associations with which Dadabhai had been actively connected during those years, the *Rahnumae Sabha* gave him the greatest trouble and anxiety. Being the Secretary, he had to bear the brunt of the work and to combat the constant attacks in newspapers and at meetings of rival associations. Having, however, given his heart to the cause, he never counted the cost. Whilst his opponents indulged in calumny, he declined to descend to their level. Taking his stand on reason, he challenged them to meet him on that ground. In the end success crowned his efforts and the religion of Zarathushtra was weaned from most of the alien accretions. The *Rahnumae Sabha* achieved its object; it survived the shocks of time, and still carries on its useful work, while its rival, the *Rah Rastnumae Zarathustrian Sabha*, met with the death it deserved, before it was three years old.

At first the Society thought it desirable to work under the patronage of the *Panchayat*. As its secretary, Dadabhai sent several representations to the members of that august assembly, earnestly soliciting the co-operation of the elders of the community and assuring them of the Society's determination never to discuss, much less to contest, the dogmas and practices prescribed by their religion. Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy and his colleagues, however, held aloof, lest their association with the Reform Society should add fuel to the fire. Looking back over those troublous days, one realizes that it was good that the work of reform was inaugurated without the help of the elders; for it is very doubtful whether such a combination would have been able

to withstand the storm that soon burst upon the reformers. The elders might have succumbed to the popular outcry, whereas, left to their own resources, the ardent young enthusiasts fought the battle all the more fiercely and triumphed. Subsequently, however, Dadabhai set about enlisting the sympathies of the leaders of the community in his activities. "I stuck to Sir Jamsetjee," said he on one occasion, "like a leech. He must have wished to avoid me as he would the plague. I could, of course, understand it. But there was no help for it."

What has been the net result? The hideous army of foreign godlings has been routed: Zoroastrianism has come into its own. Slowly, but strikingly, the alien and the accidental have been distinguished from the ancient and the essential. Moreover, the effort to shake off the outer husk has led to a revival of the study of the Scriptures. "The tares may perish, but the grain is not for death."

Fifty years after the flag of reform was thus unfurled, Dadabhai received, in London, a message from Kharshedji Rustamji Cama, who, after Dadabhai, was the moving spirit of the Society and its President, that it proposed to celebrate its jubilee. In his reply, Dadabhai recalled the initial difficulties:

In the beginning, what vicissitudes did we go through! And, even up to the present day, what continuous struggles against opposition has the Society had to make! The first central idea of the *Rahnumae* at its start was to restore the *Zarhosti* religion to its pristine purity and simplicity. That object, as far as I understand, has been faithfully adhered to under difficulties enough to damp any enthusiast. But I think nobody will deny that not a little of this success, so far as it has been achieved, is owing to you, to your knowledge of the Avesta at first hand, and to your untiring exertions to bring out and encourage more workers in the field.

Dadabhai lived to witness also the diamond jubilee of the Society. A deputation consisting of several members of the Society waited on him at his residence at Versova and conveyed its greetings to him as its founder. The Students' Literary and

Scientific Society and the *Dnyan Prasarak Mandali* also had their jubilee celebrations, which sent a thrill of joy through Dadabhai's heart. During the last ten years of his life his residence had become a place of pilgrimage for educated and refined women, representatives of all communities. They went there annually to greet him on his birthday and to bless him for all that he had done for the uplift of Indian women. To one whose whole life was a chapter of reform, reform here, reform there, reform everywhere, what other thought could have been more cheering in old age than that his zeal for progress during his youth had led to the transformation of a whole nation ?



## CHAPTER V

### EARLY POLITICS

**B**Y its charter of 1833, the East India Company had secured a twenty years lease of life. To renew or not to renew its charter, to mend or end its rule, was the burning question of the day throughout the year 1852. It supplied the necessary impetus to Young Bombay to plunge into politics.

After 1833 the Company had ceased to be a trading corporation and had become a ruling body. The machinery set up for the traders, who had become soldiers of necessity, and administrators by accident, was cumbrous indeed. There were three separate governments: the Governor-General in Calcutta, the Madras Government and the Bombay Government. The two local Governments of Bombay and Madras had to refer every important question to the highly centralized Government at Calcutta, which in its turn had to send home particulars of everything it said or did. Ostensibly, the supreme authority lay with the Directorate in Leadenhall Street; but it was in fact a mere ministry of patronage without any authority beyond that of suggestion, criticism, and obstruction. All its powers were subject to the Board of Control, which was endowed with absolute authority, but was void of any responsibility. The Board's government was carried on in secret. Only when called upon, it presented to Parliament statements which were often outrageously curtailed and garbled. In theory, the triumvirate in India was expected to exercise co-ordinate jurisdiction, but in practice the different authorities were found to thwart and retard the operations of one another. The education of the people was neglected and improvements for the internal development of the country ignored. The defects of such a system of government, unsuited to the rapidly changing

conditions of the country, could no longer pass unchallenged.

With the spread of Western education, the Indian people began to feel that they had a right to demand that the country should no longer be governed in the spirit of a commercial concern. Even at that early date, when there was not a single university in the land and no army of discontented graduates, the greatest grievance of the people was the exclusion of Indians from the service of the State. When the Company's charter had been renewed, a clause was specially introduced in the Act of 1833 to the effect that no native of India, or natural-born subject therein, should be disqualified from office by reason only of religion, place of birth, descent, or colour. Although this clause conferred absolute eligibility on Indians, it was rendered nugatory by the maintenance of a distinction between the covenanted and uncovenanted services. Young men educated at Haileybury College were sent over from England to superintend the collection of revenues and to administer justice.

A good opportunity to ventilate these grievances was presented by the application of the Company for an extension of its political existence. It looked as if the leaders of the different parties in England, the Ministers, the President of the Board of Control, and the Members of the Court of Directors had agreed among themselves that the Company's Charter should be renewed for a further term of twenty years. An Association had been formed in Manchester, which had its own axe to grind, to bring the defects of the constitution to light and to ask for a change in the administration. The British public, however, took little interest in the matter. Even the House of Commons did not attach any importance to it. The people of India, however, who dreaded the continuance of the same antiquated regime, could not afford to look on.

The Bengalees took the lead and formed an association for sending representations to the British Government. Young Bombay followed suit. In this matter the elders were not against the youthful reformers, but with them. British friends also

sympathized with the movement. On August 26, 1852, a meeting of the "native inhabitants" was held in the rooms of the Elphinstone Institution, and on the same evening was inaugurated the first political association in the Bombay Presidency, named the Bombay Association.

Among those present was Dadabhai. He was a Government servant, but that did not prevent him from taking part in the proceedings and delivering a neat little speech. It was his maiden speech on politics and would appear to be a very tame affair in these days of political fervour. It has, however, to be read in the light of the circumstances prevailing in mid-Victorian days. Public life in India was then at a very low ebb. The tide of national consciousness had not yet set in. People had only a hazy notion of their rights and wrongs. At such a stage, advocates of reform could merely appeal to the sense of fair play and justice among the authorities. The hour for self-assertion had not yet struck. Dadabhai himself has told us how modest the aspirations of the early reformers were. In a Congress manifesto, which he penned fifty-three years later, he says: "How limited our political ideas and aspirations of that time were! The extent and causes of the increasing poverty in India we had hardly any conception of, nor had we fully realized our rights and duties as free British citizens."

The maiden speech is, however, of peculiar interest to us, inasmuch as in it is foreshadowed the political creed which sustained Dadabhai in later life despite terrible disappointments.

The word grievance (said he) has nowadays become very common. It is in the mouth of everybody. But I apprehend few have any idea of the real importance of the term. Under the British Government we do not suffer any great *zoolum* (oppression). We are comparatively happier under the kind Government than we are likely to be under any other. Whatever evil we have to complain of originates from one cause, viz., the ignorance of European officers coming fresh from home. With regard to many of the habits, customs, and usages prevailing in this country, these officers may pass laws or regulations injurious to the nation and yet fancy they have done their duty conscientiously. The

authorities think them to be right, while the natives think otherwise. But if an Association like this be in existence, we can suggest improvements. These suggestions coming from such an Assembly must be listened to and perhaps adopted. The real grievances that I am aware of are those relative to the state of the *Kunbis* (peasants) in the interior and the judicial and revenue systems. But we want facts regarding all these, and the present meeting is one step in the inquiry.

If we analyse this speech, we find the root principles of his political philosophy. India's wrongs should not blind her to the benefits of British rule. The permanence of that rule was the starting-point and foundation of all hopes. India's destiny had been linked up with it, and she had no desire to change the yoke for any other. The authorities erred, but, it might be, with the best of motives. They might consider to be right what Indians might regard as wrong, and might follow a policy harmful to the interests of India. The remedy lay in agitation. People should combine to give expression to their convictions, and their voice *must* be heard. Herein lay the principal justification and hope for all the agitation Dadabhai conducted—a nation's united voice is bound to be heard.

Heretofore the critics of the British administrators were their own countrymen. Now, however, commenced the investigation by Indians themselves of their country's wrongs. With every further step in that enquiry, the list of grievances increased. With every effort to bring them home to the authorities, the hopes of obtaining a sympathetic hearing received a rude shock. But, however discouraging the outlook, the key-note of Dadabhai's policy remained the same. It induced a general belief among the Indian politicians of the day that the English people in their own country were different from their kinsmen out in India. The officials on the spot might turn a deaf ear to the representations of the people, but the liberty-loving people of England would, they hoped, willingly listen and, with their traditional love for justice and freedom, extend a helping hand to their Indian fellow subjects.

These hopes were not so readily fulfilled. That, however, did not shake in the least the confidence of Dadabhai. In his opinion it merely served to warn the people of India that they had not made adequate effort to rouse the conscience of the British public. After a lapse of fifty years, speaking before an English audience on the condition of India, he reiterated the same sentiments: "The Congress has for its object to make you understand your deficiencies in government, the redress of which would make India a blessing to you and make England a blessing to us, which it is not unfortunately at present."

During the closing years of the nineteenth century there was rising a new generation, whose estimate of British rule and British character was founded only on experience of evasion of promises and repression. A growing section of the people was deriding the idea of dependence on the British public for the redress of India's woes. Salvation seemed to lie not in supplication but in self-assertion, not in submission but in counter-action. The advanced party was preaching the gospel of violence. The patience of even the moderates among the Indian National Congress was sorely tried. A good many of its members felt that faith in British justice was a sorry crutch to lean on. Yet their weather-beaten general did not falter for a moment and went all the way from London to Calcutta, in the year 1906, to reaffirm the basic principles of his creed.

Our faith and our future (said he) are in our own hands. If we are true to ourselves and to our country and make all the necessary sacrifices for our elevation and amelioration, I for one have not the shadow of a doubt that in dealing with such justice-loving, fair-minded people as the British, we may rest fully assured that we shall not work in vain. It is this conviction which has supported me against all difficulties. I have never faltered in my faith in the British character and have always believed that the time will come when the sentiments of the British nation and our gracious Sovereign proclaimed to us in our great charter of the Proclamation of 1858 will be realized, viz. "in their prosperity will be our strength; in their contentment our best reward."

When, at last, he doffed his armour and was living in retirement, Dadabhai continued to preach the same gospel of faith in British justice. He told his friends once that he had met a Bengalee anarchist in London who argued that, while fifty years of preaching and supplication had proved of no avail, half an ounce of lead had worked wonders and would still work wonders "I felt staggered," said Dadabhai, "and could not very well repudiate the claims that were put forward to the credit of the bomb, but the idea was wholly repugnant to my feelings and convictions. I still believe that India's real salvation lies in the hands of the British public." Faith in the conscience of the British public was, indeed, part of his fibre. The messages that he sent forth to his countrymen year after year from his retirement breathed the same spirit of confidence in the British people's love of liberty and free institutions.

Did the interests of India and England conflict so violently as to render separation inevitable? No; he believed, with his British colleagues, A. O. Hume and William Wedderburn, that the interests of the Indian people and the British people were essentially the same and that the continuance of the British connexion could be made to conform to the best interests of India. It is necessary to hold these root principles of Dadabhai's political creed steadfastly before our eyes, if we would appreciate correctly the spirit of his agitation throughout his whole life—an agitation so desperate at times that, despite his genuine love for the British public and his unswerving loyalty to the Crown, among the Anglo-Indian public during the past century his name spelt sedition!

The Bombay Association drew up a petition, for submission to the Imperial Parliament, asking for an enlightened system of government for the millions of British Indian subjects. It is a far cry from 1852 to 1938, the document has not the same significance today. Nevertheless, it reads as if it were directed against some of the grievances of modern times. The question that loomed large in the petition was that of admission of Indians into the

Civil Service. As a means to that end, the establishment in each Presidency of a university for training public servants was recommended. It was also suggested that the Councils of local Government should be opened for educated Indians. The Government grant of £12,500 for the education of millions was altogether inadequate. The petitioners asked for an increase, and urged that a larger share of the land revenue might be spent on public works in the district from which it was levied.

This indictment of the Company's government caused a rift in the Association. Soon after the text of the petition was published, the English journals that had at first blessed the movement began to fall foul of it. Several Indians also seceded from the movement; notable among them were Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Ramlal Thakoreseedas, Manockji Cursetji, and Mahomed Ameen Rogay. Manockji Cursetji also issued a pamphlet entitled *A Few Passing Ideas for the Benefit of India and Indians*, the burden of which was, "first creep, then walk, then run." The most indignant of the Anglo-Indian newspapers was the *Telegraph and Courier*. That English institutions could be established in India, or that the country could be governed by the people and for the people, was a notion to which, in the opinion of that oracle, no honest politician could ever lend the slightest countenance. Might we not as well attempt, asked the writer, to assimilate the natural productions of the two hemispheres as strive to naturalize in the East the growth of Anglo-Saxon civilization? Even were the soil fitted for its reception, would the tree of Liberty flourish after its transplanting? Should it not be raised from the seed and not the graft?

There was, however, at least one journalist who could look beyond his nose.

It would be a lamentable mistake (he observed in the *Spectator*) to suppose that a movement like this can be disposed of by being "put down" or "put off," nor would it be a less mistake to suppose that to grant the claims of this petition in substance would be a concession to the Natives at the expense of the British. On the contrary, it would commence, in a more thorough style

than we have yet attempted, the work of identifying the Natives, their affections and progress with English institutions, thus recruiting the alien civil force, by which we hold the country, with a far more numerous militia of attached volunteers.

Little, however, could the writer of these words of political prescience have dreamt at the time that, within four years, the need for enlisting a numerous militia of attached volunteers would be tragically brought home to the British public by the Mutiny of 1857, which sent a thrill of horror from one end of the United Kingdom to the other.

The Bombay Association's petition created a stir in England. Several friends of India, including Sir Edward Ryan, Sir Erskine Perry, Lord Monteagle, John Bright, and Joseph Hume, raised their powerful voices in favour of the petitioners, while the cynical Cobden was one of the few who could not see any advantage either to the Indians or to their foreign masters in this vast possession. "Hindoostan," he said in a subsequent letter, "must be ruled by those who live on that side of the globe. Its people will prefer to be ruled badly—*according to our notions*—by its own kith and kin than to submit to the humiliation of being better governed by a succession of transient intruders from the antipodes." His countrymen, however, were in favour of retaining India.

On March 13, 1853, a meeting of "The Friends of India" was held in Charles Street, St. James's Square, London, and it constituted itself an India Reform Society, with Danby Scynmour as President and John Dickinson as Secretary. Its activities, however, could not materially influence the decision of the House of Commons, which still acquiesced in the retention of the double system of government with all its cumbrous machinery. The anomalous relations of the Board of Control and the Court of Directors also remained practically unaltered. A salutary change was, however, introduced in the Court of Directors. The number of members was reduced to eighteen, of which six were to be nominated by His Majesty's Government from amongst those persons who should have resided in India for at least ten years.



The same qualification was required of a moiety of the twelve members to be elected as before by the proprietors of the East India Stock. All the civil and medical appointments to the Company's service in India were thrown open to public competition. Such competition was, however, to be conducted in England so that Indians were practically debarred from entering the service. The result of the agitation, as a whole, was in no way gratifying to the Indian public. It established, however, one point very clearly, namely, that concerted agitation and action had wrung from the British Ministers more than was considered possible. It illustrated alike the advantages of such discussion and the need for propaganda to dispel the colossal ignorance and apathy of the British public. Dadabhai took these lessons to heart. Thenceforth, "agitate, agitate, and agitate" became his watch-word.

## A PREACHING FRIAR

“THE desire of my life was to serve the people as opportunity permitted,” wrote Dadabhai. With him work was worship; the record of service and sacrifice, even during those early years, was remarkable for its magnitude and variety. We have already seen him at the crest of the wave of reform that swept over society during his youth. Before even he had attained his thirtieth year, his signal services in several spheres raised him to the position of a leader not only of the Parsi community but also of the Bombay public. In that capacity he felt keenly the need of an independent newspaper.

Pioneers of reform are invariably handicapped for want of an organ to expound their views. The Press, as a rule, shouts with the crowd, a cash basis governs the policy of journals just as much as that of any other business concern. There were in Bombay five Gujarati journals, all owned by Parsis, but none had the independence or the impartiality needed for the cause of reform. Dadabhai had the zeal and the will to start and run such a newspaper, but not the means to finance the scheme. He mentioned the difficulties to his public-spirited friend, Kharshedji Nasarwanji Cama, and found in him an enthusiastic counsellor and helper. It was agreed between the two friends that a fortnightly newspaper should be started, named the *Rast Goftar*, or the *Truth Teller*, that Kharshedji Cama should provide funds, that Dadabhai should run the paper without remuneration, and that copies of the journal should be distributed among the members of the community free of charge. Whilst Dadabhai was the brain, Cama was the sinews, so to speak, of the journal. That fact was known only to a few, the general public of Bombay looked upon Dadabhai as the sole founder and proprietor of the

paper. Even K. N. Kabraji, the famous editor of the paper, showed his ignorance of its origin when, in replying to the toast of the *Rast Gofstar* at a Parsi dinner in London, in 1900, he referred to Dadabhai as its founder. Dadabhai promptly corrected Kabraji and informed the assembly in touching terms of the honourable part Cama had played in launching that journal.

Carlyle speaks of a preaching friar settling himself in every village, building a pulpit which he calls a newspaper, and preaching therefrom what most momentous doctrine is in him for man's salvation. Such a preaching friar was Dadabhai. The public of Bombay in those days required to be educated not only in the principles of social and religious reform, but also in the duties of citizenship. So there he stood, the apostle of truth and exponent of the religion of humanity, in the pulpit of the *Rast Gofstar*, to preach his gospel to the people and to combat the forces of ignorance and conservatism which impeded their progress.

The first number of the new journal saw the light on November 15, 1851, when a thousand copies were printed for free distribution. There was not a single advertisement in it: it was a sheer labour of love. November 15 was an unusual day for launching a newspaper. There was, however, a good reason for ushering it in advance of the new year. A serious local disturbance, which had culminated in a Parsi-Moslem riot, impelled Dadabhai to hasten into the arena of journalism.

Before the catastrophe, the most cordial relations had subsisted between the Muhammadans and the Parsis. Some of the most prominent business-houses in the City consisted of partners belonging to the two communities. For instance, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, the leader of the Parsi community, and Mahomedally Rogay, the foremost Muhammadan citizen of the day, had been stanch friends and partners in business for a quarter of a century. At the time of the rupture there was no enmity between the two communities, no cause for any quarrel, but an ill-conceived article in a magazine, edited by a Parsi youth, caused an appalling ferment. This magazine was called *Chitra Dnyan Darpan* (*The*

*Illustrated Mirror*); its editor was Behramji Kharshedji Gandhi, the same *Sisoti* boy whose paper on "female education" had led to practical measures for the education of women. He had arranged to give a series of memoirs of celebrated persons who had influenced and transformed society in different places at different intervals. The Prophet of Arabia found a place in that galaxy, but the account that Gandhi gave of the Prophet's life was wanting in that sentiment of respect and tolerance which is due to a sister community. Not unnaturally, the feelings of the Muhammadans, the most sensitive people on earth in matters affecting their faith, were seriously hurt. The lithographed portrait of the Prophet, which was given with the article, also gave umbrage, inasmuch as this is prohibited by Islam. An undiscovered villain added fuel to the fire by posting a copy of the picture, with ribald and obscene remarks underneath, on the main entrance of the principal mosque.

There could be but one answer to such insane provocation. Islam was up in arms. Large crowds of Muhammadans assembled in the mosques of the town with the Koran in one hand and a knife in the other. The Parsis avoided entangling themselves with the infuriated crowd, but the Muslims were bent on vengeance. At a meeting held in the Juma Musjid on Friday, October 7, 1851, they arrived at the frightful decision to proclaim a *jihad* (crusade) against the Parsis. A large crowd rushed out, seething with wrath, and armed with bludgeons, crying "*Din! Din!*" ("Religion! Religion!") The first thing they did was to fall upon the small police force on duty and to overwhelm it. Then they marched triumphantly along the streets to Pydhownie, near the entrance of Bhendi Bazar, which was then a stronghold of the Parsis. Sturdy and dauntless though the Parsis of the day were, they were numerically insignificant and were belaboured mercilessly by the rioters. For weeks together, that part of Bombay was a scene of pillage and destruction, and the Parsis had to put up with shocking atrocities such as defilement of corpses. The police prosecuted a few of the worst offenders, but this had no effect on the hooligans. Only after the

editor had been compelled to tender a written apology a truce was declared.

In connexion with this disturbance the Parsi community looked in vain to the police for protection. If not altogether hostile, they were indifferent, probably because they held that it was itself responsible for the quarrel. In the midst of grave provocation, the Parsi Press and the Parsi leaders pursued a timorous policy. Dadabhai felt, along with a large number of Parsis, that the leaders had betrayed and humiliated the community. While they sought shelter in their houses in the tranquil locality of the Fort, Dadabhai was living close to the scene of the disturbance and was an eye-witness of the terrorism of the Muhammadans. As the elders did little to protect them, the Parsi residents of Baharkote looked to "Dadabhai Master," as he was then called, to represent their grievances to the authorities. To him they entrusted the task of drafting their memorial, and to him alone they made over the custody of the funds raised for their defence. In the service of his oppressed brethren Dadabhai did not spare himself. Seeing the craven attitude of the Press and the vacillating policy of the leaders, he felt bitterly the need of an independent and an intrepid newspaper. A truce had been declared, no doubt, but the ferment had not subsided. A fresh outbreak was anticipated. This accounts for the fact that he took the field forthwith with the new weapon, the *Rast Gofar*.

The paper was thus launched, in the thick of the fray, on a career of stormy usefulness as a fearless champion of truth and justice and as an uncompromising exponent of the forward school of thought. Its young editor was not a novice. His literary output, even at that early date, was considerable and estimable. He had edited the *Dnyan Prasarak* magazine and contributed numerous articles on social subjects. No less than eighteen lectures of his on Natural Philosophy and Astronomy had been embodied in that journal. He had also been a regular contributor to the *Samachar Darpan*, a Gujarati daily, and had written a series of articles entitled "Dialogues of Socrates and Diogenes." As



KARSON DAS MULJI



SORABJI BEGGALI



KHARSHIDJI N. CAMA



DADABHAI NAOROJI

RASI COIAR ' SYNDIC ATT



Secretary to the *Rahnumae* Society, he was editing its publications and had contributed some papers himself. He had also helped Naoroji Furdoonji in editing the publications of the Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy Philosophic Institute.

The first three numbers of the *Rast Goftar* were almost exclusively devoted to a discussion of the situation created by the riots and their aftermath. In most touching terms the editor showed how unfriendly the police had been towards the Parsis, how supine the attitude of the Parsi leaders of the community was, and how humiliating their action in coercing the editor to tender an apology. It might, however, be argued that in his defence of the writer of that ill-conceived memoir Dadabhai was carried away by his ideals of liberty of thought and freedom of the Press. It was not so harmless as Dadabhai, in his anxiety to stand by a brother journalist, took it to be.

Dadabhai's indictment of the police and of the Parsi leaders gives a foretaste of the intrepid spirit which marked his political speeches and writings. The stern critic who, in later years, was never weary of fighting courageous battles against vested interests and denouncing the high-handedness and inequities of the rulers, was not slow in leading a revolt against the leaders of his own community and questioning their authority to speak in the name of the people. Similarly, although he was a Government servant, full of ambition to rise in the service, he did not flinch from criticizing in scathing terms the conduct of the officials.

We used to hear (he observed in one of the articles) of the loathsome conduct of those who assaulted people in the night and fell on their knees on the following morning, craving forgiveness. But in this case the Muhammadan assailers have, instead of bending their knees, forced the aggrieved to make amends to them. We were under the sweet delusion that justice had extirpated tyranny, but during the last two months justice has gone to rest and aggression has had its free runings.

That such injustice should be perpetrated under British rule was a riddle to him. "Are we awake," he exclaimed, "or are we



seeing a dream?" Deprecating the action of the officials, who hit upon the idea of extorting an apology from the editor as the simplest means of quelling the disturbance, he asked his co-religionists why they had placed the direction of communal affairs in the hands of a few elders. Was it merely to follow them blindly and to be their slaves? Did leadership consist in driving comfortably in a carriage and pair and receiving the *salaams* (salutations) of the poor? Did it not carry with it the responsibility to treat the poor as their own kith and kin?

On November 26, 1851, a deputation of the Parsis waited on the Governor of Bombay. They handed him a petition and prayed that effectual measures might be taken to preserve the public peace. Dadabhai was one of the deputation. From that date "the Promise of India" came to the fore as a recognized leader. There was no sphere of public activity where he was not a leading light; there was no movement for the furtherance of communal or national welfare where he was not an earnest and active worker. Under his editorship the *Rast Gofar* became within two months an influential organ of advanced opinion. There was a demand from its readers that its size should be increased and that it should be converted into a weekly paper. Dadabhai thereupon announced that the demand would be complied with, provided there was an adequate increase in the number of subscribers. The rate of subscription was fixed very low—two annas<sup>1</sup> per month—but he hoped that those who could afford would give a larger subscription so as to enable the proprietors to spread the paper among the poorer classes of the population. Subscribers did come forward, and from January 1852 the fortnightly was converted into a weekly, and published every Sunday morning.

From the commencement the *Sisoti* boys stood by the editor of this organ of reform. It is remarkable that in those days a Government servant was not precluded from running a newspaper. Dadabhai's connexion with the *Rast Gofar* continued even after he left India in 1855 and made England his home. A syndicate was then formed to run the paper. It consisted of Dadabhai

<sup>1</sup> Roughly equivalent to 2d.

himself, Kharshedji Nussarwanji Cama, Kharshedji Rustamji Cama, Dossabhai Framji Karaka, Naoroji Furdoonji, Sorabjee Shapurjee Bengalee, and Pestanji Ruttonji Colah. Three years later, Karsandas Mulji, the well-known Hindu reformer, became the eighth member of this group.

When the Persian monarchy was overthrown by the followers of Islam, the national glory and religion of the ancient Iranians received a deadly blow. Early historians have traced the footsteps of the conquerors on the soil of Iran in letters of blood. According to their accounts, the soldiers of the Khalifa of Bagdad traversed the country, sword in hand, summoning the vanquished Zoroastrians to choose either the Koran or death. This story of terrorism, however, cannot be reconciled with the prevalence of the ancient faith amongst a section of the population of Iran to this day. The conversion of Iran to Islam did not take place concurrently with the Arab conquest. Many Zoroastrians, who did not abandon their country, continued to cling to their ancestral religion. They were, however, subjected to various disabilities. For centuries they lived almost like slaves in their fatherland, and for more than seven hundred years they were not even aware of the existence of their co-religionists in India. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, however, the ties so long severed were renewed.

In the year 1478 a learned Parsi, named Nariman Hoshang, was deputed to Iran by the Parsi settlers in Navsari, Surat, and Cambay to obtain information concerning certain religious questions. Nariman's visit brought to light numerous inequities. The most galling was the levy of the poll tax. At the time of collection, the tax-gatherer was at liberty to indulge in acts of extortion. The list of the disabilities of the "infidels," as the Zoroastrians were called, was a very formidable one. Only a few items will show how abject their condition must have been. They were not allowed to trade. They could not open schools for their children. The use of umbrellas, spectacles, rings, and various other articles was forbidden to them. They should wear only tight knickers instead

of trousers, and their shoes should be of the prescribed pattern, with broad, turned-up toes. Riding on any animal in towns was strictly prohibited; even in the desert they had to dismount if they met a Muhammadan, be he a nobleman or a beggar. Their houses should be so low that the top could be reached by a Muhammadan with his hand extended.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the Parsis in India made strenuous efforts to remove those disabilities. An Amelioration Fund was started. Its Trustees deputed Manekji Limji Hataria to Iran as their delegate. So zealously he helped the Irani Zoroastrians that for years afterwards they recalled his name with tears of gratitude.

Hataria was asked to inquire into the social, intellectual, and political condition of the Zoroastrians in Iran. In this inquiry Dadabhai was keenly interested. Hataria sent him pathetic accounts of their impoverished condition and their helplessness in the midst of a fanatical population. At a Parsi meeting, Dadabhai read out the touching letters of Hataria. This led to the opening of a separate fund for helping the oppressed people, for educating their children, and for preparing memorials to the authorities in Iran.

Even after he had settled in England, Dadabhai kept constantly in touch with Hataria, whose letters on important issues went first to him and were forwarded by him to the Bombay Committee with suggestions. Years afterwards, when the Shah of Iran visited England, it was Dadabhai who led a deputation to him and presented to him an address, praying for considerate treatment of his Zoroastrian subjects.

A public meeting was held on September 22, 1852, in the Elphinstone College, to perpetuate the memory of a great philanthropist and patron of education, Framji Cowasji Banaji. It was decided that the funds collected for the purpose should be used for the formation of a museum in connexion with the Students' Literary and Scientific Society, and that Government should be asked to erect a building for it, to be named the Framji



P. R. COLAH



K. R. CAMA



D. I. CAMA



NAOROJI TURDOONJI

RAST GOITAR<sup>™</sup> SYNDICATE



Cowasji Institute. Framji Cowasji had rendered valuable assistance to the Students' Literary and Scientific Society. In gratitude for such assistance Dadabhai collected a sum of Rs. 6,000 and offered it, on behalf of the Society, to the meeting.

A notable feature of the meeting was the presence of several students of the Elphinstone College. Fired by the spirit and example of Dadabhai, they had flocked to the meeting and endowed a special prize fund in the memory of Framji Cowasji. If it is a teacher's office to lead as well as to teach and by the spark of his personal example to set the heart of his pupil on flame, Dadabhai fulfilled that mission, not only in regard to his college pupils but also in regard to his political disciples throughout his life.

These activities by no means complete the record of Dadabhai's work between the years 1851 and 1855. It was a record remarkable for the range of his sympathies and the versatility of his intellect. He was an active member of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society and read a paper on "Astrology" before the Philosophic Institute of Bombay. When the first Parsi Dramatic Society was formed in Bombay in 1853, he took a lively interest in its work and served on the committee of management. He presided at an important meeting when the Trust Deed of the Fort Charitable Dispensary of Bombay was settled and he was one of the Trustees of the Dispensary. Although his means were limited, he gave pecuniary assistance as well as personal service to such philanthropic movements. In 1855 a meeting of Elphinstonians was held to perpetuate the memory of Professor Patton. Dadabhai was invited to preside over the meeting. In the same year he was put on the Grand Jury.

After the horrors of the Napoleonic war there was practically peace in Europe for nearly forty years. High hopes were entertained, particularly after the Great Exhibition of 1851, of permanent peace, but these were doomed to disappointment. Within three years the Czar of Russia claimed recognition of his rights as Protector of the Christian subjects of the Turkish Sultan. This claim was repudiated by the "Sick Man of the East," who,

despite all his infirmities, declared war upon Russia, fully relying on the support of England and France. The astute Ottoman was not wrong. England and France soon found themselves drawn into the fray.

The theory then current was that Russia on the Danube meant Russia also on the Indus. No wonder when the Patriotic Fund was raised in connexion with the war, there was great enthusiasm among the people of India to mark not only their sense of loyalty to the British Crown but also their gratitude for the endeavours of the rulers to keep the Russian wolf as far away as possible from their frontiers. A public meeting was held in Bombay on January 31, 1855, in furtherance of the objects of the Patriotic Fund. Lord Elphinstone presided; Dadabhai was one of the speakers. He saw in the conflict a struggle of liberty against tyranny and prayed for the success of Great Britain and her allies because, he believed, they were on the side of justice and freedom.

"A very pertinent question has been asked," said he, "why the natives of Bombay should join in contributing to the Patriotic Fund, and the question has been very ably answered by Dr. Wilson, who has pointed out to us that the interests of India are bound up with those of England."

## CHAPTER VII

# FROM COLLEGE TO COUNTING-HOUSE

“DADABHAI, what a fall!” said Principal Harkness when he learnt that the Professor had decided to exchange mathematics for merchandise.

What could have induced Dadabhai to take such a step in spite of his indifference to wealth and his earnest desire to consecrate his life to the service of humanity? The explanation is afforded in some stray notes he has left behind. There he states that he accepted the offer to join the commercial firm of the Camas (the first Indian firm established in London in the year 1855) as he was “desirous of seeing an intimate connexion established between England and India,” and “particularly to provide a home for young Indians so that they might freely go to England and compete for the Indian Civil Service and other services.” “India for the Indians” was his slogan even during those early days, and this great aim he steadfastly kept before his eyes in the midst of all the allurements of business. Indeed, business was but a passing phase; pleading at the bar of the British public for the redress of India’s wrongs was his permanent mission in England. Thus what seemed at first sight to be a fall turned out to be a rise, an indispensable step for Dadabhai’s elevation to the unique position he afterwards attained as the greatest patriot of his day.

Before the year 1855 there was not a single Indian mercantile firm in England. The Camas were pioneers in the line. They decided to open a business-house in London with a branch in Liverpool. It was a venture in which they required the co-operation of a partner of high ability and integrity; they invited



Dadabhai to join the firm. The Professor agreed, but he was not so sure of his success as a business man. Nor could he be certain that he would not soon be tired of the humdrum life of a merchant. He requested Government that he might be granted leave and allowed to keep his lien on his post, but the request could not be granted. The die was cast; he resigned his post.

In a farewell address, the students of the Elphinstone Institution expressed their sense of the great loss to the college. Amongst them were Ramkrishna Bhandarkar and Bal Mangesh Wagle who became one of Dadabhai's lieutenants during the time when he was Prime Minister in Baroda. The Students' Literary and Scientific Society also placed on record its deep sense of the valued services rendered by Dadabhai as a member of the Society. A deputation consisting of the Society's representatives waited upon him and presented to him its resolution eulogizing his services "in connexion with female education and the diffusion of knowledge among the Parsi community by means of popular lectures on Natural Philosophy and the publication of a cheap periodical literature "

Thus honoured and blessed, Dadabhai started on his first voyage to England on June 27, 1855, in the P. and O. Navigation Co.'s boat *Madras*. She took as many days to reach Aden as are now taken to land passengers at Marseilles. At Aden the passengers were transferred on July 9 to the Calcutta steamer *Oriental*, bound for Suez. Thence, proceeding overland, they joined the *Sultan* at Alexandria and arrived at Southampton on August 22nd.

With Dadabhai went Muncherji Hormusji Cama and Kharshedji Rustamji Cama to found the new firm, under the name Cama & Co. These three were to form a triumvirate. No action was to be taken unless they were unanimous in their decision; matters in dispute were to be referred to the Head Office in Bombay. A more unbusinesslike arrangement could not have been devised. Numerous occasions arose when the triumvirate found it impossible to come to a unanimous decision.

There were also strong differences of opinion concerning

fundamental principles and policy. Dadabhai felt he was called upon to lay in England the foundations of success not merely of his firm but also of the business enterprise of Indians generally. On the credit of his firm and the confidence which it inspired in the London market would depend the chances of development of India's trade with the Continent. Kharshedji Cama shared his idealism in business, but it often startled Muncherji Cama. He complained to the Head Office that it had given him as a colleague a philosopher who did not mind sacrificing the interests of the firm to what appeared to be quixotic principles of commercial morality.

On one occasion Dadabhai suspected that the manufacturers with whom his firm had placed an order for reel-threads, on behalf of a Bombay firm, had not supplied reels of the specified length. He therefore took the bundles of thread to his bedroom and sat up till midnight, measuring the thread. Some reels measured eighty yards instead of a hundred, which was the stipulated length.

"We shall have to reject these reels," said Dadabhai to his colleagues.

"Why?" asked Muncherji Cama.

"Because of the shortage."

"That is not our concern," urged Muncherji. "Such discrepancies are not unusual; if our Bombay friends feel aggrieved, they may prefer a claim for damages."

Dadabhai was, however, obdurate. "What you say may be true," said he, "but having discovered the shortage, how can I be a party to the transaction?"

Kharshedji Cama agreed with Dadabhai. The matter was referred to the Head Office; sharp came peremptory instructions not to make any more fuss about the shortage. Dadabhai was prepared for this rebuff. Often had he been over-ruled in this fashion, and a continuance of the business alliance after the expiry of his agreement with the firm seemed undesirable and impracticable.

Amongst the varied commodities handled by Cama & Co.

in the course of its business were opium, wine, and spirits. Dadabhai could not persuade himself to pocket the earnings of dealings in articles which led to the degradation and ruin of thousands of human beings. In a letter written to Kharshedji Nassarwanji Cama in the Gujarati language, which was then the medium of communication between them, he informed his more practical partners that he had decided not to accept his share in the profits accruing from such transactions.

Will you tell me (asked Cama in reply) from what sources Government get funds for the payment of salaries to professors of colleges and other officers? Did you not receive your salary as a professor from revenue derived from the traffic in opium and liquor? If you retire from business and revert to Government service, will you not once more live on the tainted revenue obtained from the same business that stinks in your nostrils? If our firm ceases dealing in opium, will it put a stop to the traffic in that commodity? Will not others deal in what you taboo?

Nothing, however, could induce Dadabhai to change his mind. The result of all such differences of opinion was that Dadabhai severed his connexion with the house of Camas. Kharshedji Rustamji Cama also retired from the firm before the termination of the agreement. Although his biographer does not specifically refer to it, there is an allusion to the reason in the following sentence of the memoir: "At the end of 1858 or early 1859 he decided, for personal reasons which did credit to his honesty, to resign his partnership."<sup>1</sup>

The Camas, as we have already noticed, were his best friends. They warmly sympathized with his ideals of service and sacrifice and shared his enthusiasm for the betterment of the condition of his countrymen. To them he looked confidently for moral and material support in his work of social and religious reform, and from them he always derived inspiration. One can realize, therefore, the feelings of regret with which he must have severed his business connexion with such friends. The dissolution of partnership, however, left no rancour behind. Each side appre-

<sup>1</sup> *Vide Kharshedji Rustamji Cama*, by S. M. Edwardes, p. 16.

ciated the point of view of the other, and their relations continued to be as friendly and cordial as before

During his association with the firm, Dadabhai did not fail to inspire some of the young scions of the Cama family with his ideals of personal as well as commercial morality. A remarkable instance was that of H. R. Camajee, who wrote to Kharshedji Rustamji Cama on April 4, 1859, from Liverpool

Papa has at last given to Dorabjee the management of the China firm and he is to make me and Dorabjee general partners when my term expires Do you recommend me to join with Papa in China business? I do not really like Opium Trade because I have seen with my own eyes the result of such trading and the effects on the consumers

Dadabhai returned to India, his mind more enriched than his pockets. To have lived in England for three years during that era was in itself a liberal education. It was an era when such great figures as Gladstone, Cobden, and Bright were breathing a new spirit of liberalism into British politics, and such authors as Herbert Spencer, Mill, and Carlyle were revolutionizing society with new theories of social reconstruction. In such an atmosphere Dadabhai realized vividly the contrast between the social, political, and economic condition of the people of the West and that of his own countrymen. Where could he have studied political theory, the working of democratic institutions, and the parliamentary system of government better than in the country universally recognized as the "Mother of Parliaments"? What, indeed, could have been a better school for the study of international commerce, banking, and currency than London, the heart, the brain, the nerve centre of the British Empire?

While growing more and more conscious of the faults of the British administration in India, Dadabhai learnt to appreciate more and more the sense of justice and fair play in England. The study of the strong and weak points of British character stimulated in him the desire to have India's battles fought not only on the floor of the House of Commons but throughout Great Britain.

In March 1856 Dadabhai was nominated Professor of Gujarati in the University College, London. He held that office till the year 1865-66, when he retired. He was also a member of the Faculty of Arts and Laws and a member of the Senate of the College. The following entry in the University Calendars for these years shows what his duties were and the books he read with his pupils: "Monday and Thursday, from six to seven o'clock, Grammar and Exercises, Green's Sentences, and Bal Shastri's *History of British India*."

What information, however, have we about the life which Dadabhai led in England? Where did he live and in what style? Whom did he meet? Whose friendship did he cherish? What did he think of them and they of him? In vain have we tried to glean information on these points. Only a few particulars could be gathered from personal inquiries made of Dadabhai's nephew, Framji Rustamji Desai, who was one of the batch of students whom Dadabhai took with him to England in the year 1859.

Unlike the other Camas, Muncherji Cama was very conservative in his views and habits. The three partners, therefore, lived in London in Parsi style. It appears, however, from Dadabhai's correspondence with K. R. Cama that Dadabhai lived mostly in Liverpool, where the bulk of the cotton business was transacted. They had a Parsi cook and Parsi waiters, as Muncherji insisted on all the Zoroastrian rites being rigidly observed. As he had no objection to knives and forks, he might well have reconciled himself to the use of finger bowls, but he insisted on the Parsi butlers going round the table, at the end of each meal, with a jug of water in one hand and a basin in the other. Whether their English guests joined in the customary ablutions is not known.

In those days Dadabhai went about in Liverpool and London dressed in a costume of his own invention—a long broadcloth coat, buttoned up chest high, a white silk handkerchief round the shirt collar passed through a plain gold ring, black trousers to match and a light black velvet cap, from which flowed a blue silk tassel. Pherozeshah Mehta, Hormusji Wadya, J. C. Cama and other protégés, and office assistants of Dadabhai, all used to be

attired in the same Dadabhai Naoroji fashion. Later, however, he decided to do in Rome as Romans did, but whenever he returned to India, he reverted to the orthodox Parsi costume.

Though absent from Bombay for three years, Dadabhai had not lost touch with the problems of social reform. On August 20, 1855, the Parsis of Bombay submitted a petition to the Legislative Council for reforms in the laws relating to Parsi marriages and succession. Bigamy was allowed by the elders of the community in special cases in those days. Social reformers railed against the custom as a gross perversion of the doctrines of Zoroastrianism. Wordy warfare was, however, of no avail. Monogamy could be enforced only by the legislature. Those in favour of reform, therefore, carried on a crusade for an enactment specifically prohibiting bigamy. Dadabhai, though away from the scene of the contest, took lively interest in it and supported the advocates of reform with a lengthy memorandum.

Dadabhai's stay in Bombay was a short one; the *Parsi Prakash* chronicles two events. On December 15, 1858, a public meeting was held in the city to celebrate the opening of the Victoria Museum and Gardens, as a mark of the feeling of love and loyalty of the citizens of Bombay to Queen Victoria. We find that Dadabhai supported a proposal requesting Government to give a suitable site for the erection of a building for the purpose. Pestanji Ruttonji Colah, Dadabhai's colleague, published in 1859 a journal called *Stri Gnyan Mala*, which aimed at enriching the knowledge of women. Dadabhai contributed articles to the first number of the journal, dealing with several social topics of feminine interest.

On January 9, 1859, Dadabhai embarked on his second voyage for Europe, accompanied by Jamshedji Palanji Kapadia, who afterwards won renown as a Persian scholar and historian, and Pestanji Ratanji Colah. He also took with him, as his protégés three students—his nephew Framji Rustamji Desai, and two youths of the Cama family, Jamshedji Kharshedji Cama and Hormusji Dorabji Cama. Arriving at Liverpool, he wrote to

K. R. Cama (March 7): "I expect to move into my house, 63, Oxford Street, next Thursday."

Soon afterwards Dadabhai started business on his own account under the name of Dadabhai Naoroji & Co. and took Kapadia and Colah as his partners. Edulji Nasarwanji Master joined him in the middle of the year 1860 as an assistant. There was none now to stand between him and his principles. The course of business ran smooth. It was established beyond doubt that successful trading was in no way incompatible with the principles of ethics; a thriving tradesman could remain a high-souled man, as did Dadabhai.

One day, when he was in his office room, a visitor was announced.

"Hullo, Ardeshir,<sup>1</sup> what brings you here?" asked Dadabhai, warmly embracing the visitor.

"Business," replied Ardeshir, "and excellent business too!"

Ardeshir's services had been specially engaged by a firm in India trading with China. He was sent to England to make all necessary arrangements for obtaining four big vessels required by the firm. He decided to place the order with some shipwrights, through the house of Dadabhai, who had done him a good turn and to whom he was longing to show his gratitude.

Conscientious Dadabhai invited tenders for the work. One of the quotations included an item, "Commission to Dadabhai Naoroji & Co." at the rate of 5 per cent on the amount of the tender. It was not the lowest tender, but had the amount of commission been omitted, it would have been the lowest. Dadabhai sent for the representative of the firm.

"What is the meaning of this item?" he asked.

"It is the usual practice," replied the representative. "We allow a certain percentage to all firms through whom we receive orders."

"If it is the usual item, why have the other firms not shown it in their quotations?"

"If they have not specifically mentioned it in their estimates,

<sup>1</sup> Probably one of the young Camas.

they must have made provision for it under some head or another."

"But this would make it impossible for my firm to accept the tender," said Dadabhai. "If you give us commission, how can we be expected to supervise the work conscientiously? I am paid for the work by the buyer; I cannot accept payment from the seller as well!"

The representative did not know what reply to give. He must have felt as though he had been suddenly transported from a commercial house to the pulpit!

"You must delete the item," continued Dadabhai, "if you want us to accept your tender."

The item was deleted, and the tender was accepted. Little could the representative of the manufacturers have then thought that the elimination of that item was to cost his firm a good deal more than five per cent! Scrupulous to a fault as he was, Dadabhai's supervision entailed additional work, which in fact meant extra expenditure of thrice the amount that they would have paid by way of commission, had Dadabhai been a "normal" business man.

Dadabhai's firm was then in its infancy, but he appears to have earned enough to keep him in fairly affluent circumstances during those days. He was a Director of the Queen Insurance Company and a guarantor of the Industrial Exhibition of 1862. Ever willing to help a good cause, he cheerfully rendered substantial financial assistance to several projects of public usefulness, among which were the movements to raise funds in Bombay for perpetuating the memory of Mountstuart Elphinstone and Jugannath Shankarsheth, for an address and purse presented to Principal Harkness on his retirement, and for the provision of a Library of Sanskrit books for the Elphinstone Institution. Handsome also were his contributions to the Zoroastrian Fund raised in Europe in 1861 for the Parsi community in London and to another Fund raised in Bombay for giving English education to Parsi girls.

How varied and manifold were his activities in England about this time may be realized by a mere recital of the institutions with which he had been associated. He was an active member of



the Liverpool Literary and Philosophic Society, the Philomathic Society, the Council of the Liverpool Athenaeum, the Royal Institute of London, the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, the Ethnological Society, the Anthropological Society, the Society of Arts and of the National Indian Association. Highly respected as a mason, he was one of the founders and the treasurer of the Lodge, "The Marquis of Dalhousie."

The British public knows little about the Parsi inhabitants in India. In Dadabhai's days it knew much less. He, therefore, read papers before the meetings of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Liverpool on the manners and customs of the Parsis and on their religion, giving two distinct accounts, one of the old or orthodox school of Parsis and the other of the new and reform school. In the first part he described the incidents in the daily life of a Parsi of the old school, from the moment he got out of bed to the hour of his going to rest, and the principal ceremonies from the hour of his birth to the last moment of his exit from this world. Although one could gather from the tenor of his speeches that he was a reformer, he spoke of the orthodox school with his usual fairness and forbearance. This made so favourable an impression on Professor Max Muller that he made a special reference to Dadabhai's fairness in his *Clips from a German Workshop*<sup>1</sup> "There is no sneer," says he, "no expression of contempt anywhere, even when . . . the temptation must have been considerable."

It was Dadabhai's conviction that Indians should study the business methods of the British. Interested in the cotton trade, he became a member of the Manchester Cotton Supply Association, and while himself benefiting from the available opportunities to study the organization of the cotton trade in that district, he also read before the members of the Association instructive papers on the supply of Indian Cotton. Likewise, he repeatedly impressed the Bombay millowners and cotton merchants that they could not successfully compete with Lancashire in the London or Liverpool market, or in the Bombay market, until

<sup>1</sup> Vol I, London, 1867, p 165

they had carefully studied the methods and devices of the Lancashire merchants and manufacturers to secure India's raw material at the lowest price and to sell manufactured articles to the best advantage.

In Liverpool Dadabhai came in contact with Samuel Smith, one of the most trusted business men with whom Dadabhai Naoroji & Co. dealt in cotton. The business acquaintance soon ripened into life-long friendship. Smith was keenly interested in Dadabhai's struggle for the emancipation of India, and wholeheartedly supported him in all his political activities when he was in a position to do so as Member for Liverpool from 1882 to 1885 and for Flintshire from 1886 to 1906. He was a pillar of strength to the temperance movement in England, and in that work Dadabhai was his enthusiastic coadjutor. He went to India in 1906 to preside over the All-India Temperance Conference and attended the historic session of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta when, for the first time from the Congress platform, Dadabhai as President demanded self-government. On the fourth day of the Congress (December 29) the delegates heard with grief that this true friend of India had suddenly passed away and they placed on record their deep sense of the loss sustained by India in his death.

In the midst of all his literary and commercial pursuits Dadabhai seldom missed an opportunity of voicing the grievances of Indians. Indeed, he became an unofficial ambassador for India in England. In 1859 commenced his campaign of agitation concerning the injustice inherent in the system of recruiting the Indian Civil Service. Open competition for the Service had not long been established when, all of a sudden, the India Office announced a reduction in the age limit from 23 to 22. This change debarred the very first Indian student, Rustamji Hirjibhai Wadia, from appearing at the examination. Dadabhai submitted a protest to Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for India. The change in the age limit, he urged, should have been notified beforehand, and he asked that in justice all candidates otherwise eligible should be allowed to appear at the examination.

Dadabhai then asked Sir Erskine Perry to take up the matter on behalf of India. Sir Erskine's friendship was for Dadabhai an unfailing source of inspiration and strength. It was a friendship resting on the union of two hearts drawn by mutual attraction to each other, and it endured till the last days of that noble-minded Englishman.

Sir Erskine interested John Bright in young Wadia. That steadfast friend of India cheerfully accepted the brief. Before, however, he and other friends could raise the subject in the House, the American Civil War broke out. It engrossed the attention of Parliament completely; the Indian Civil Service question had to be shelved. Dadabhai, however, continued his correspondence with the authorities, until an assurance was given by the Secretary of State in a letter that "no further changes in the Civil Service Regulations would at any time be made, without due publicity being given to them at the earliest possible period."

To Dadabhai this was a question of vital national importance. Macaulay had said years ago that no yoke was more oppressive than a foreign yoke. Dadabhai was convinced, after his critical examination of British policy and administration in India, that unless Indians were given an increasing share in the administration of their own country, the British yoke would become more and more galling. The upheaval of 1857 made him very pessimistic about the future, but the transfer of the administration from the East India Company to the Crown and Queen Victoria's memorable Proclamation, promising equality of treatment to her Indian subjects, buoyed him up. That Proclamation became his Bible. He quoted it repeatedly with as much reverence as a Christian divine would have quoted the Scriptures. All his political preaching resolved itself in its ultimate analysis to the root idea that by the pledges solemnly given the Government and the people of Great Britain were bound to give fair treatment to India and to extend to her children the rights and privileges of British citizenship. It was not, however, easy for the rulers to fulfil the pledges implicit in that charter of liberty. They tried

for years to circumvent it, but growing tired of that game, during the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon, they sought to ride off on a new and narrow interpretation of the promise. The words "so far as may be" in the Proclamation gave them, they contended, the discretion to set a limit to its application. Lord Morley, however, vindicated the honour of England.

I do not believe (said he) that the Ministers who advised Queen Victoria in framing one of the most memorable documents in all our history meant those words to be construed in a narrow, literal, restricted, or pettifogging sense. I do not believe that Parliament ever intended this promise of the Queen's should be construed in any but a liberal and generous sense.

The grievances of the people were many, but in the opinion of Dadabhai the fountain-head of discontent was the denial to the people of their share in the administration. Increased association of Indians in the administration of their own country was the very foundation of progress. It was this broad aspect of the problem that impelled Dadabhai to conduct life-long agitation on the subject. The same consideration impelled him, two years later, to raise a controversy concerning appointments in the Indian Medical Service. This controversy also had its origin in an arbitrary decree by which the doors of the Service were closed to Indian students. The aggrieved youth in this case was Mancherji Byramji Colah, who was shut out from competition for the post of Assistant Surgeon to the Army Medical Department. There was, it was contended, an altruistic motive underlying that decree. His Majesty's Government feared that Indian youths would not be able to stand the climate of the different places to which they would have to be posted from time to time!

As advised by Dadabhai, young Colah submitted a memorial to the Secretary of State for India. The reply was disappointing. Nothing daunted, Dadabhai had another memorial submitted separately to the War Office, to the House of Lords, and to the House of Commons, signed by several Indian residents in London. The ban was removed. Meanwhile, however, young Colah had

passed the age limit and was disqualified. Subsequently, owing mainly to Dadabhai's exertions, he was admitted to the service and rose to a high position in it.

The number of Parsi students in England was growing; there was also a steady increase in the number of Parsi residents engaged in commercial pursuits or employed in business-houses in London and in other cities of England. With his usual foresight Dadabhai thought of providing for them a centre of social intercourse. A club would not have answered the end he had in view. He was aiming at an organization which might grow with the growth of the Parsi community in England and cope with all the problems concerning their welfare. The outcome was the London Zoroastrian Association, which has during the last eighty years rendered valued assistance and advice to Parsis resident in the United Kingdom, particularly to Parsi visitors and students. From the inception of the Association in 1861 till the date of his retirement from England in 1907, Dadabhai was its *President*.

To the youths sent to England he was a sort of guardian-general. He had a wonderful gift of drawing them to him and giving a turn to their minds and their hearts which made them useful instruments of public weal. For several years there was under his supervision a group of students who profited by his unrivalled knowledge of the affairs of the world as well as by the example of his simple and methodical habits and high ideals. To help them to qualify themselves for high offices in the State was the first step towards the goal of Indianization of the services. The next step was agitation. In regard to that step Dadabhai found himself invariably thwarted by official high-handedness. "Defeat" and "Despondency" were, however, words not to be found in his vocabulary. Taking the pledges in the Queen's Proclamation as his birth-right, year in and year out, he continued to preach the gospel of "India for Indians" and lived to see a steady and substantial improvement in the opportunities available to rising generations to occupy higher positions in the service of the State.

## CHAPTER VIII

### DOMESTIC TROUBLES

IT is time now to glance into the home of Dadabhai. A pathetic feature of the life of almost all leaders of thought in India, during the middle of the nineteenth century, was the lack of intelligent fellowship and co-operation of their wives. In no case, however, could the situation have been more poignant than in that of Dadabhai. Into the details of that chapter there is no need to enter. In order, however, to follow the course of events that impelled him to return to Bombay post-haste, in September 1863, it is necessary that the veil should now be partially lifted.

If marriages were made in heaven, as many a good Parsi believed in those days, the selection of Gulbai as a bride for Dadabhai was a heart-rending illustration of the inscrutable ways of Providence. Besides labouring under the disabilities common to the illiteracy of the age, Gulbai was far from being prepossessing, and awkward in speech and manners. Dadabhai tried his best to teach her, but she showed not the least aptitude for study. She could not even read or write.

Dadabhai resigned himself to his lot. In no way did the infelicity of this union ruffle the serenity of his mind or alienate his affection, on the contrary, it served to elicit the highest and the noblest that was in him. However ill-matched, he was not found wanting in tenderness or fidelity. He took her out, whenever possible, and with rare patience and self-renunciation played the husband and the teacher in turn to widen her outlook on life and render her as happy as one could be in her position.

Dadabhai was, no doubt, reconciled to, if not quite content with, his lot. Not so, however, his mother. As her son arrived at man's estate, she began to realize the enormity of the mistake she had made in thoughtlessly marrying him in his early boyhood.

to one incapable of being his better half. What an elevated position in society he was occupying! What higher positions and distinctions awaited him in the future! Such a talented young man required the inspiring company, intelligent co-operation, and cheering assistance of an accomplished partner in life. Could she not yet repair the mischief done? By this time, however, Dadabhai was the father of a boy, born in 1859. Even so, his mother thought it was not too late to mend the mistake!

It was not then quite uncommon for a Parsi to take a second wife. Bigamy was repugnant to the teachings of Zoroastrianism, but the religious prohibition was not rigidly enforced. During the days of dictatorship of the Parsi *Panchayat* a Parsi could marry a second wife with the permission of the elders, given in exceptional cases. Towards the middle of the nineteenth century, however, when the *Panchayat* had lost all its authority, particularly on the eve of the passing of the Parsi Matrimonial Laws which made bigamy penal, many a Parsi took unto himself a second wife in the life-time of the first. Dadabhai's mother wished her son to follow suit, but he instinctively shrank from what appeared to be a revolting proposal.

Painful though it was to him to disregard her wishes, he could not help thinking that she was in this respect unreasonable and unjust, she, on the other hand, thought he was dense and obstinate. Saintliness and self-abnegation were virtues, but every virtue carried to excess is converted into a folly, if not a crime, and Dadabhai, she believed, was not justified in sacrificing his life in this manner. At last she appealed to her brother, Rustamji Desai, to prevail upon Dadabhai not to allow his sentiments to overpower his reason. The uncle tried to induce his nephew to pay heed to his mother's advice, but in vain. It was an example of sheer renunciation—a case of *factum valet*, however hard and disagreeable. He made a final appeal to his mother in the name of humanity. "Put me," he said, "in the place of my wife. Suppose I, your son, am suffering from the disabilities from which she suffers. Would you, in that case, ask my wife to

marry a second husband?" After this his mother dropped the subject.

That was the position when Dadabhai had gone to England for the second time. In front of his residence there was the house of an English medical practitioner, Dr. Archer, who had three educated and intelligent daughters. Dadabhai used to visit them frequently. Muncherji Cama could not brook such familiarity. Rumours were soon set afloat that Dadabhai had become a convert to Christianity and wished to marry an English woman. These reports reached the ears of his mother. She sent piteous protests, imploring him to desist from taking such a step. "I tried to persuade you," she said, "to take a second wife, but you would not listen to me. Now you think of marrying an English woman and bringing disgrace to our family!"<sup>1</sup>

Dadabhai was greatly hurt. Not only his honour, but also the happiness and peace of mind of his wife and mother were at stake. He went straight to the P. and O. Company's office and booked his passage to Bombay.

It was twelve o'clock midnight (September 9, 1863) when a visitor knocked at the door of Dadabhai's family house in Bombay. Manekbai and Gulbai were fast asleep, but a friend and major-domo of the family rushed to the door.

"Who's that?" he asked.

"It is Dadabhai," was the reply.

"What?" thundered the man inside. "You villain, how dare you take Dadabhai's name who is in England? Get away, otherwise I will break your bones!"

"Maku," said the visitor, gently calling the man by his name, "please open the door."

These words had a magic effect on Maku. Recognizing the familiar voice, he joyfully threw the door open and held Dadabhai in his arms.

Then met the mother and son; and then the husband and wife;

<sup>1</sup> "This letter was written by me," said Framji Rustamji Desai to the author, "as dictated by Dadabhai's mother."



their eyes wet with tears. Within a few minutes Dadabhai cleared all misunderstandings. He was still the same spotless son of his beloved mother, the same faithful husband of his afflicted wife.

Life in Bombay was as full as ever for Dadabhai. Social reform and literary work kept him fully engaged. There were some amusing incidents also. In October 1863 he went with Ardeaser Cursetji Cama and Hormusji Wadya to Purandhar Sanatorium, twenty-five miles from Poona. One evening, whilst he and Cama were walking on a public road, Wadya, who was a few yards in front of them, riding a pony, said *poice* to a party of two Englishmen and a lady, who were walking ahead of him. That expression was generally used to call upon pedestrians to give way to horses and carriages, but it nettled one of the Englishmen. He struck the pony on the head with his stick. Before the rider could say anything, the animal bolted, and the indignant pedestrian entered into the gateway of a bungalow close by, showering abuse on the rider. Dadabhai and Cama, who could not realize what all the noise was about, came up running to the Englishman and asked what the matter was.

"D——n the rider and the pony also," exclaimed the man. "That beast had nearly trodden on my wife's heels."

"You might speak more politely," said Dadabhai on hearing some other coarse invectives.

"D——n you and your politeness. I will not allow you or anyone else to tread on my wife's heels."

"Such conduct is most ungentlemanly," interposed Cama.

Greatly incensed, the man rushed out of the compound and said, "You are as great a cad as your friend."

"Thank you," retorted Cama, "that's very polite of you; we are much obliged."

This roused the ire of the man still more. Brandishing his stick, he threatened to assault Cama. Then, turning to Dadabhai, he asked, "What's his name?"

"The fact of the matter is——" The calm and collected professor tried to soothe him, but was not allowed to proceed further.

"I don't want facts. I want your name."

Dadabhai took out a card from his pocket. Having written with a pencil, "Mr. A. C. Cama," under his own name, he handed the card to the indignant *Sahib*, and said, "And may I have your name?"

"It is not necessary," was the curt reply "I am Commandant of the Military Post of Purandhar."

Returning to his lodgings, Cama wrote a letter to the Commandant, Captain Morgan, demanding an apology. An acrimonious correspondence ensued, resulting in the expulsion of the three Parsis from the Cantonment by order of the Commandant. The incident had its sequel in the law courts. Cama filed a suit against the Commandant, claiming damages. The gallant officer repeated in the court all the choice expressions he had used and added that he had shaken his fist about six inches from Cama's face and had said, "If you were not such a contemptible little snob—or brute I forget which—I would knock your head off your shoulders for your insolence." He justified the intimidation on the ground that Cama's ironical "Thank you" was provocative and said that he had expelled the Parsis from the hill, as they had not obtained his permission to enter the Cantonment. The Sessions Judge gave judgment in favour of the defendant with costs.

Cama appealed to the High Court, which reversed the decree of the lower court. The learned Judges held that the acts complained of amounted in law to an assault, but that the plaintiff was entitled to only nominal damages, as he had in no way suffered in reputation. They gave a decree for him with nominal damages of one rupee, observing at the same time that Cama was "fairly entitled to the credit, the value of which his residence in England and his apparent adoption of English views as to the points of honour in conduct will have taught him to appreciate, of having behaved with some show of spirit in the whole affair."

Another exciting incident took place at a public meeting held on February 25, 1864, at Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy's Castle, where it was proposed by Dadabhai that a statue should be erected in honour of Jagannath Shankarsheth in the Victoria and Albert

Museum in recognition of his public-spirited services. Edwin Hancock seconded the motion; Dr. Birdwood, the Sheriff, and some other Europeans supported the proposal. A discordant note was, however, struck by Chisholm Anstey, the famous barrister of the day. He contended that the Sheriff had convened a meeting of all the inhabitants of Bombay, whereas those who had sent a requisition to him had asked for a public meeting to consider a method for expressing the gratitude of "Mr. Jagannath Shankarsheth's countrymen" towards him. Although he was an inhabitant of Bombay, he was not a countryman of that gentleman. It was, therefore, officious on the part of the Sheriff to have called him and the inhabitants at large to that meeting. He might have stayed away, but he was there to enter his protest so that the meeting might not be made into a precedent by silly and designing men. He went on to say that there were about half a dozen signatories to the requisition expecting similar tributes to their work. He referred pointedly to Robert Knight, editor of the *Times of India*, "who had been promised a heavy purse." This was the unkindest cut to the "Bayard of Indian Journalism," whom the Bombay public had spontaneously decided to honour, on the eve of his departure from India, as one of the very few English journalists who had striven consistently to promote good feelings between Indians and Europeans. Despite the thunder of the irate lawyer, however, it was resolved to appoint a Committee to raise funds for the statue. Dadabhai was one of its active members.

There was a distribution of prizes and scholarships to the girls of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society's schools in Bombay on December 12, 1863. At this gathering Dadabhai was a welcome visitor. Sir Bartle Frere, Governor of Bombay, who occupied the Chair, paid him a warm tribute as being "one of the first promoters of female education in Bombay in its earliest infancy." It was a matter for gratification, he added, that Dadabhai was then amongst them "after a number of years usefully and profitably spent in England," to observe with satisfaction the progress made in the schools.

A notable achievement during this short visit to Bombay was

the inauguration of a Society of Parsis who took an oath not to dine without having the ladies of the family at the same table. This "revolutionary" social organization marked the beginning of the emancipation not only of Parsi but also of Hindu women from the tyranny of a social usage which enjoined restraints on their liberty little different from those associated with the *purdah* system. Among the promoters of the organization the two most conspicuous figures were Manockji Cursetji and Dadabhai Naoroji. They held each other in great esteem; both stood head and shoulders above their peers in intellect and zeal for social reform. Whilst the orthodox section of the community was deriding the innovation, Dadabhai sought to justify it by giving an account of the condition of women in different countries in the past and of their elevating influence wherever they had attained their real status in society as their husbands' partners in life.

The cultured members of the family of Manockji Cursetji were the life and soul of the movement for social reform. Their relations with Dadabhai were most cordial and intimate. Dadabhai was a frequent visitor at their residence, Villa Byculla, in Parel Road. Manockji Cursetji left his sons Cursetji and Jehangir, who were students in England, under Dadabhai's care. He saw to the payment of their school fees and other matters. Manockji Cursetji had started a fund in the middle of the year 1863 for a school to teach the English language to Indian girls. Dadabhai contributed Rs. 5,000 to the fund, and gave the Cursetjis all moral support.

Manockji Cursetji sailed for Europe with his two daughters on April 14, 1865, a fortnight in advance of Dadabhai. To Miss Serene Cursetji, Dadabhai was an affectionate friend and counsellor—she always addressed him as "Dadabhai Master" and she had no more true and disinterested friend. In her diary for the day, she wrote: "It is seldom that one meets with such a friend, as this world is a vile one; consequently I am proud of him—and thankful to God that he has given me a good, pious, and virtuous friend."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The author's thanks are due to Miss Cursetji for allowing him to read her diary for this period.

Dadabhai left Bombay for England on April 29. On this occasion he took with him, for the first time, his mother and wife, and his son Ardeshir and daughter Shirin. Where they put up, there is no family record to show, but we learn from Miss Cursetji's fascinating diary that he rented a house in Hornsey, with a splendid garden, and named it "Parsee Lodge." Among young Cursetji's reminiscences of the period there is one concerning Dadabhai's affection for his children that deserves mention:

It was a sight at once charming and delightful to see him, when off work, unbend himself, squatted on the drawing-room carpet, playing with his little boy and girl. His conversation was always interesting, informative, and instructive, decked out with anecdotes and stories, and flashes of friendly fun and ready wit. His voice had a singular charm; I have it still in my ears.

Before he sailed for Europe Dadabhai had offered to the Bombay University, of which he had been nominated a fellow in April 1864, a sum of Rs. 1,75,000 for the endowment of a Fellowship to perpetuate the memory of Lord Canning. The amount was contributed by several donors, Dadabhai himself having subscribed Rs. 50,000. The proposal, however, fell through as, before the amount was paid, the commercial crisis which supervened on the termination of the American Civil War spelt the ruin of many a business concern and also of many an individual in England and India. Before the war England used to buy huge quantities of cotton from the Southern States of America; after the outbreak of hostilities the supply was cut off and the Lancashire spinners had to look to Bombay for the raw material. There was thus a boom in the cotton trade in the Bombay markets, followed by speculation, which drove the entire population of Bombay crazy and brought about the ruin of numerous merchant princes and commercial houses in India.

For Dadabhai's firm the war was a windfall. During the period of hostilities it received large consignments of cotton, and he amassed a fortune. He had, however, dealings with several firms

in England and India, which owed him large sums of money. Their collapse inflicted severe losses on him, but the chief cause of catastrophe was his own good nature, his sheer self-effacement in helping others. Although the times were critical, he had tried to extricate a friend from embarrassment. This friend had established himself in business in England. Speculation during those giddy days had brought him to the verge of insolvency. When Dadabhai heard the tale of his woes, he bestirred himself to avert the crisis. Against the warning of friends he stood surety for the man who had incurred losses to the extent of £30,000 and was practically bankrupt. He thus saved the friend's firm, but imperilled the stability of his own. The creditors of the insolvent firm flocked to his doors, brandishing their books of account and demanding immediate payment. Dadabhai quickly met all his obligations as a surety, but saw his own firm go under.

Another friend to whom Dadabhai extended a helping hand was Karsandas Madhavji, through whom he had large dealings with Bombay houses. Even during the hectic days of the share-mania Dadabhai gave credit to Karsandas's constituents, relying on the recommendations of this friend. Karsandas soon found himself in deep waters and asked Dadabhai to honour his bills to the extent of £60,000. Dadabhai's friends in Bombay, particularly Jamshedji Kapadia, who had an inkling of the impending bankruptcy of the Hindu merchant, cautioned him not to incur any such liability. Kapadia had retired from the firm and returned to India in 1865. The warning, however, came too late. Dadabhai had already informed Karsandas that he would accept the bills; and, true to his word, he honoured them all. It was such single-heartedness and readiness to help a lame dog over the stile that meant his own undoing.

Even in the midst of failure Dadabhai's credit for integrity stood as high as before. Much sympathy was expressed for him in England as well as in India. Within a week he placed his accounts before his English creditors. Impressed by his integrity, they released him from his liabilities and engaged his own services in connexion with the liquidation proceedings. They also

showed their confidence in him by offering him fresh loans to set him up in business again.

Referring to the crisis of 1866, the writer of Dadabhai's obituary in *Investor's Review* (July 17, 1917) wrote:

Many years after, when his character and attitude happened to come up in the Bank of England Discount Office, its chief, while as a conservative pooh-poohing and sneering at Mr. Naoroji's utterances, told us that he knew him to be a man of strict integrity in business and as proof added, "he met all his engagements in 1866, a thing comparatively few in the East were able to do."

Another story is related, indicating how highly Dadabhai was respected in banking circles. Some of the banks in England refused accommodation against documents which Cama & Co. were prepared to honour, and insisted on the firm drawing bills and getting the recognized brokers' acceptance. Dadabhai raised a controversy and eventually had his way. The Governor of the Bank of England, it was reported, called on Dadabhai at his office and complimented him on "his spirited resistance and the justness of his contention."

Ever cool and collected, patient and contented, Dadabhai took his misfortunes calmly and philosophically. Miss Serene Cursetji, who was then a guest of the family, refers in her diary in touching terms to the troubles which he faced with his characteristic calm during those unhappy days. Writing on Tuesday, June 26, 1866, she observes:

Poor Dadabhai has truly a deal of patience and his troubles he bears marvellously. I learnt from papa that his affairs will have to be wound up in a day or two: this will be done more through the misconduct of his creditors, many of whom have behaved shabbily, very shamefully towards him, but I feel sure God will reward him for his righteousness.

By Friday, June 29, it was all over. Miss Cursetji's diary for the day opens with these words:

None could think from the unshaken calmness and patience that reigned in Dadabhai's face as well as action that his affairs were in such a dreadfully painful condition. As usual he took his breakfast—but poor Dadabhai's mother was sad and kept crying for the whole day and speaking in more than harsh terms to poor Mrs. D. All this was very painful.

After the failure of his firm it was impossible for Dadabhai to keep with him the protégés whom he had been supporting in their studies. The family, however, stayed with him for a year more. On her return from England, Dadabhai's wife gave birth to a second daughter, in Bombay, on October 10, 1868. The girl was called by the pet name Maki,<sup>1</sup> which clung to her ever afterwards.

<sup>1</sup>Abbreviation of Manekbai



## CHAPTER IX

# EDUCATING THE BRITISH PUBLIC

THERE is a silver lining to every cloud. The gloom of reverses in business was dispelled by the brilliance of Dadabhai's success in other spheres of public usefulness. Pursuit of commerce in England was not an end but a means to an end, namely, work for the economic and political well-being of India. To that end he now bent his whole energy, resorting to means more congenial, more direct and more promising.

Dadabhai's first impulse, when he went to England, was to obtain first-hand knowledge of the cultural and political institutions of England. Whilst studying those institutions, he felt more and more convinced that if the British people were true to themselves, true to their inbred sense and traditions of equality, justice, and fair play, they would help India to obtain freedom. The policy of the Government of India was certainly not such as to stimulate such hopes, the arrogance of the British officials of the day and their unfeigned contempt for Indian intellect and character were positively destructive of such optimism. But who were the real rulers of India? The Government of India? Certainly not. Their masters in England? Yes. But who held the reins of government in England? The bureaucracy? Certainly not. The Crown? Not at all. The Ministers? Nay, despite the fact that they held the reins of office, not even they ruled England and India. It was the people of England that governed both. To call the Government of England a limited monarchy was a misnomer, it was a republic, limited only in name, a commonwealth where the electors were really and truly the sovereign. It was their will which, subject to constitutional limitations, was law. The destinies of India were linked with those

of such a commonwealth; their interests were identical; united they stood; divided they both must fall. If the policy of the Government of India had not been directed in the past towards the end visualized by Dadabhai, it was, he felt, because the British public were not kept well informed of the true state of affairs in India. If their ignorance were dispelled, their insular prejudices removed, and the mists of misunderstanding cleared away, the ties between the two countries could be strengthened, to the lasting advantage of both. "We Indian people believe," he used to tell English audiences, "that, although John Bull is a little thick-headed, once we can penetrate through his head into his brain that a certain thing is right and proper to be done, you may be quite sure that it will be done."

Such being his reading of the English mind and English character, it became his life-long mission to awaken the British people to their responsibilities concerning the administration of India. Already he had launched his campaign for the removal of certain wrongs and had succeeded. It was, however, impossible for him, single-handed, to rivet the attention of the British public on the diverse neglected problems affecting the welfare of India. For the diffusion of the knowledge of Indian affairs and for the creation of a healthy public opinion in England it was necessary to have a group of workers. Without British allies and their co-operation the need for Indian reforms could not be adequately impressed on the House of Commons in whom rested the ultimate authority. Dadabhai, therefore, started, in collaboration with W. C. Bonnerjee, the London Indian Society, with the object of bringing Englishmen and Indians together at social gatherings and exchanging views on subjects connected with India. There were two interesting self-denying ordinances. The Society could not discuss "any purely religious subject," nor could it at any time pledge itself to any party, political or social, in India or in England. Thus protected from pitfalls, the London Indian Society carried on useful propaganda for more than fifty years, with Dadabhai as its President until his retirement from England in the year 1907.

How he fought on behalf of candidates for admission to the Services we have seen. That struggle, however, merely marked the commencement of a war that was to last for thirty years. The question of the Indian Civil Service again came to the front in 1865, owing to a change in rules adversely affecting Indian aspirants for the Service. Sanskrit and Arabic used to be included in the optional subjects for the examination; most of the Indian students found it easy to take up one or other of the languages. It was, however, proposed to reduce the number of marks that could be secured in this way. Dadabhai raised his voice against the proposal. In addressing a meeting of the London Indian Society, he stressed the importance of the two classical languages, and of the precious store of knowledge enshrined therein. The Society thereupon sent protests to the Secretary of State, and the controversy ended in Dadabhai's triumph.

Skirmishes of this sort were almost a normal feature in the life of Dadabhai. Not only for defending the economic and political rights of the people of India, but also for vindicating their intellect and their character, he had to enter the arena of public controversy from year's end to year's end. In February 1866, John Crawford, President of the Ethnological Society of London, read a paper in which he sought to establish the intellectual and moral superiority of European races over Asiatics. Not only the President of that learned Society, but almost the whole of Europe was then under this ethnological illusion, which was the result of a superficial study of races according to the divergences of their cephalic index, colour, facial angles, and other peculiarities. Dadabhai would not allow such a libel to go unchallenged. He was not out to demolish all the sociological fallacies underlying the paper; he was anxious merely to vindicate Indian intellect and Indian character. He, therefore, came forward the very next month with a crushing rejoinder, tearing to shreds all the specious arguments in Crawford's thesis. It was a spirited and cogent appeal to history and science which only a student of the history and literature of Europe as well as of Asia, ancient as well as modern, could have put forward within so short a time.

It was stated by Crawford, as an illustration of the mental inferiority of the Asiatics, that in the seminaries at eighteen the Indian youth was left far behind by the European and that he never after recovered his lost ground. Dadabhai explained that the principal object of the Indian boys who joined English seminaries during the early years of the East India Company was to acquire a knowledge of the English language. The fact that they discontinued their studies on attaining that object was no justification for the assumption that the Indian youth was incapable of progress after eighteen. Since those days there had been such a rapid advance in university education that the *Friend of India* had remarked that university examinations had been "assuming a Chinese magnitude" and presenting a spectacle at once curious and gratifying.

The dearth of great names in Asiatic literature was another disparaging comment of Crawford. Dadabhai cited several famous works in ancient Persian and Indian literature. With pride he recalled the tribute paid by European savants to the unsurpassed achievements of the Brahmins in grammatical analysis and Sanskrit works abounding in every branch of science. Quoting Horace Wilson, he pointed out that in fiction much of the invention displayed on the revival of letters in Europe had an Indian origin, while in spiritual and philosophical speculations Hindus had traversed the very same ground trodden by the philosophers of Greece and Rome. In astronomy and metaphysics, too, they had kept pace with the most enlightened nations of the world, while in medicine and surgery they had attained as much proficiency as was practicable before the study of anatomy was rendered possible by the discoveries of later research.

As regards character, Dadabhai quoted testimony after testimony of authors, travellers, and administrators, to refute the sweeping denunciation made on imperfect information. What would an Englishman have to say to the following picture of English character drawn by a Parsi who was disgusted with the bad name given to Indians by European writers of the type of Crawford?

Look at all the mass of untruths in the daily advertisements and puffs . . . how much swindling is there in the concoction of companies for the benefit of the promoters only. . . . Look at the number of immoral haunts in London, read the account of *Life in Liverpool*, see the social evil and street immorality, cases of unfaithfulness in domestic life. . . .

Studying the English character in this superficial manner, that critic had formed the opinion that the English were the most hypocritical, the most selfish and unprincipled people. "If," said Dadabhai, "such evidence as Mr. Crawford relies upon be conclusive as to the character of the natives of India, I do not see how the Parsi gentleman's conclusion cannot also be admitted as proved." Why, the principal argument that he and his colleagues had to encounter in their efforts to promote female education in India was that it had corrupted English society!

When we left India in 1855 to come over here to open the first Parsi firm (said Dadabhai), the principal advice given by our European friends was that we should be exceedingly careful in our business in the city against the many rogues we should meet with there. "In India," said one, "we keep one eye open; in England you must keep both eyes wide open."

Was evidence of this sort to be allowed to traduce whole nations? Differences in the condition of different people and their various peculiarities required careful study, and due allowance had to be made before attributing any result to innate differences.

Repeated misrepresentations brought home to Dadabhai the need for an organization, more broad-based than the London Indian Society, which could bring together Englishmen and Indians on a common platform not merely for the ventilation of Indian grievances but also for the removal of erroneous impressions. Once more, therefore, we find him working on a project for the formation of an association to lay solid foundations of mutual understanding and friendship between England and India. The outcome was the East India Association, inaugurated on December 1, 1866, in collaboration with a committee of

retired English officers with whom the idea of acquainting the British public and the British Government with matters pertaining to the East Indies appears to have originated. Its membership was thrown open to all who were interested in the welfare of India.

Independent and disinterested advocacy of the interests of India and promotion by all legitimate means of her welfare was its object. As an institution it aimed at providing a Library and Reading Room, and affording Members of Parliament and the public generally information and assistance on Indian subjects. It was, however, not to take notice of complaints of individuals against the Government of India or their Civil and Military Servants unless a question of public importance was involved. Nor was it open to it to undertake to act in matters that could be decided by law courts, or by an appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

During his stay in England Dadabhai had succeeded in rousing in English friends such deep sympathy for his country and such high regard for his disinterested labours that a large number of eminent English politicians, statesmen, ex-governors, and ex-officials resident in England readily joined the Association. The first President was Lord Lyveden, son of Robert Smith, Advocate-General of Bengal, whose fame among the people of India was, to quote the words of James Mackintosh, the philosopher-lawyer of Bombay, "greater than that of any *Pandit* since the days of Manu." Lord Lyveden was born in Calcutta. This circumstance, coupled with his connexion with the Board of Control, first as its Secretary and then as its President, had given him an interest in the welfare of India almost as keen as his interest in England. Dadabhai was at first only a member of the Committee, but the duties of Secretary of the Association soon devolved on him.

The platform of the Association provided a forum for all possessed of any special information or views on Indian and Colonial subjects. At its meetings was always to be seen a brilliant assemblage of prominent Englishmen, Indians, and Anglo-Indians, exchanging views on Indian affairs, uniting in

voicing Indian grievances, and stimulating, so far as possible, the British public and the British Government to take a deeper interest in India than they had previously evinced.

Dadabhai was the outstanding figure at these gatherings. At the very first meeting held on May 2, 1867, he read a paper on "England's Duties to India." He raised three main issues. Was British rule in India a benefit to India and England? If so, what were the best means to make it endure for the longest possible time? Were such means adopted? Acknowledging the benefits of law and order under the British regime, he gave figures showing enormous contributions made by India towards England's wealth and strength. Then he referred to the annual drain of the wealth of the country to England and the total exclusion of Indians from the administration of their own country. Nevertheless, India wanted her connexion with England to endure. Why? The explanation was to be found in a parable taken from a vernacular journal. A fox entangled among some creepers was pounced upon by a swarm of flies. Seeing them sucking his blood, a crow asked the fox whether he might drive away the flies. "No," replied Renard, "these flies are now satisfied, and if you drive them away, another hungry swarm would take their place."

What about the means to ensure solidarity between the two countries? Some people maintained that India was conquered by the sword and must be retained by the sword; some advised a policy of benevolent despotism, others, however, stressed the wisdom of a policy of justice, of "equality among all Her Majesty's subjects and honesty with the princes of India." Reviewing the three policies, Dadabhai observed that the third, "the policy proclaimed to the people and the Princes of India in the name of the Sovereign, was the hope of India and the anchor of England."

It is gratifying and hopeful to find that the statesmen who rule and the thinkers who guide the policy of this country have distinctly seen and clearly enunciated that India should be ruled for India's sake; that the true and only tower of strength to the English rule is not a hundred thousand English soldiers, but the

willing consent and grateful loyalty of the people themselves; and that when the time comes for a separation, and which I trust is far distant, the world may rejoice in a glorious chapter added to its history, of the regeneration of an old, but long unfortunate, race, and India may for ever remember gratefully the benefactors who restored her to more than her ancient splendour and civilization.

If this was the right policy, what were the right means adopted of implementing it? Now followed a formidable list of grievances. Neglect of education, denial to qualified Indians of a share in the administration, repeated famines, lack of irrigation and means of communication, these and other woes of India were brought vividly to the notice of the audience, with an exhortation to the British people to be "true to their nature and genius," and to apply themselves honestly to the discharge of their duties.

In another paper read by Dadabhai, on July 5, on "Mysore" he gave documentary evidence to show that the British Government were bound to acknowledge a separate Government in Mysore and the continuance of a "native rule" in that territory. On November 25 Dadabhai came forward with yet another paper on the "Expenses of the Abyssinian War," demanding that India should not be saddled with any portion of the cost of wars fought in the interests of the British Empire. It was argued by official apologists that India had lost nothing because it would have had to pay the troops even if they had not been transferred. Dadabhai's examination of this argument was devastating.

What is it that the troops are kept in India for? Whatever that was, India lost by the transfer of the troops. If it was nothing, then the army should have been reduced. If it was something, then how could it be said that India lost nothing? If the troops were required for security, then it was unfair that India should have been deprived of that security and yet have been made to pay for it.

Dadabhai's enthusiasm proved infectious. Member after member came forward to read papers on important subjects,



On June 11 General Sir Arthur Cotton read a paper on "Irrigation and Water Transit in India." The unprecedented succession of drought and famine was then filling India with distress and discontent. The authorities seemed to favour the construction of railways more than canals as a remedial measure. Sir Arthur had some caustic remarks to make with regard to the published papers on the subject, all filled with writing, but with not one word about doing anything. If India could be irrigated with ink, the famines would have been stopped long ago; but he should have preferred a Governor-General, or head of the Public Works Department, "who would irrigate one acre, or cut one mile of navigation, to one who would write a whole Blue book full of frothy declamation about the necessity of irrigation, and the terrible difficulties attending it."

On August 13, 1867, Dadabhai raised the question of admission of Indians to the Civil Service and proposed that a memorial be sent to the Secretary of State for India, demanding that competitive examinations should be held in India as well as in England. Through the kindness of Sir Erskine Perry he had come to know of a minute of a Committee of the Council of the Secretary of State for India which had recommended, in the year 1860, that examinations should be held simultaneously in both countries for all the Civil Services. He was asking nothing more. Sir Herbert Edwards suggested that the Association should also call attention to the desirability of establishing scholarships so as to enable students to go to England to complete their education. After having heard the members of the deputation, Sir Stafford Northcote expressed himself favourably disposed to both the suggestions.

The next step was to interest members of the House of Commons in this subject. Dadabhai approached several M.P.s and succeeded in getting Henry Fawcett to give notice of motion to the effect that the House of Commons deemed it desirable that the examination should be held simultaneously in London, Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. He then read another paper on

April 17, 1868, and moved that the Association should support Fawcett's motion.<sup>1</sup>

Hostile critics often questioned the fitness of Indians for offices of trust. They were under the illusion that Indians were deficient in ability, integrity, and physical power and energy. Dadabhai did not wish to go over the ground he had already covered in his paper on European and Asiatic races, but, he said, he asked those who spoke scornfully of Indians not to forget how some Englishmen in India, in former days, were suddenly transformed into rich Nawabs; how after selling their power and influence in India the Company bought their power in the English legislature by bribery; how the Company's servants cheated their own masters; and how their conduct furnished some of the most remarkable instances upon record of the power of interest to extinguish all sense of justice and even of shame. It was natural for educated Englishmen drawing high pay or profits to feel indignant at the bribery and corruption of the poor people with low education, low pay or profits, and low prospects, but Dadabhai asked them to look round and observe the amount of fraud and "doing" in London and to remember that several Englishmen, drawn from the lower classes, were not behaving creditably in India.

The real question was, when Indians were as highly educated as Englishmen, did they attain to the same character for integrity or not? Holding in his hand a pamphlet of ninety-five pages, entitled *Evidence relating to the efficiency of Native Agency in India*, Dadabhai said he had collected a large volume of testimony "as to the efficiency and integrity of the educated natives employed in the various departments of the Indian Service in office of trust and responsibility."

It was an interesting symposium of opinions given by eminent authorities. Retired governors, civilians, and military officers, having experience of varied provinces, all testified to the intelligence of Indians; a few of them, however, thought that integrity was not yet a strong point in Indian character. Dadabhai did not

<sup>1</sup> The motion was eventually withdrawn.

keep back from his audience a single adverse opinion; he left it to them to draw their own conclusions. Some of these opinions served to clarify the situation. For instance, Sir Bartle Frere observed

In India, as in Europe, we find a great difference in capacity between different races, between different classes in the same race, between the same race in different stages of civilization; between the children of an intellectual and a non-intellectual family, between the rich and the poor, between members of different religious schools, and, in fact, we find that every variety of circumstance in the origin and training of a man makes some difference in what I may call his original intellectual capacity. And after making allowance for this difficulty in instituting any comparison between the two groups of nations, I should say that there was no perceptible difference between the children of the two groups, save that the children of the warmer climate were more precocious in the early development of their intellects, and paid for their advantage in lacking somewhat of the stamina and strength of the more slowly ripening children of the colder climate.

Of this I feel pretty confident, that, if a million children could be taken at random, so as to represent every variety of nation, rank, and religion in Europe, and another million taken in like manner in India, there would certainly be no inferiority observable in the intellectual capacity of the Indian million. I believe that many of the prevalent differences of opinion as to the actual result, as shown by experience, arise from our forgetting, in almost every comparison we make, many of the main elements which ought to enter into our calculation and comparison.

Nobody supposed, said Chisholm Anstey, that the natives of India were deficient in ability. He believed in their integrity, in their capacity, and in their fitness for government. Nevertheless, he was against the clamour to "thrust a certain proportion of natives every year as eligible for high office" upon the Secretary of State, the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief. He would not employ an Indian any more than an Englishman in a particular

district or province in which his household gods were set and his worldly fortunes were cast. Why? Because he was an Indian? No, because he would not appoint anyone to an office in a locality in which he had for some time resided.

Dadabhai was ready with a rejoinder. To say that there should be no Indians in the Civil Service of India was like saying that there should be no Englishman in the Civil Service of England. The localities of appointment were mere matters of detail. The main question was to put Indians and Englishmen on a footing of equality as regards entrance into the service. Dadabhai's motion was carried, the learned counsel being the only dissident.

Within two years of its existence the Association had demonstrated what a wide field of useful work lay before it. It set Dadabhai thinking how the efforts of its members could be reinforced if it had branches in India at the capital cities, and if it were helped financially by the Princes and the people of India. This idea commended itself to his colleagues. It was decided that he should proceed to India and establish branches of the Association in selected places and collect funds.

A deputation of the Association, including Dadabhai, had presented to the Secretary of State a memorial soliciting immediate attention to the necessity of irrigation works in India. It needed, however, not one or two, but a volley of memorials before the authorities could be roused to set the official machinery in motion. On the eve of Dadabhai's departure to India, it was proposed that another representation should be made to the Secretary of State. In a minute which Dadabhai left behind and which was placed before the Association's meeting, held on December 8, 1868, he gave a historic survey of the devastating famines with which the population was periodically afflicted. Why was the work of irrigation culpably neglected? Was it a question of cost? If so, he urged, the question should not be considered mainly as one of profit and loss. Even if it were certain that the expenditure would yield no return, the State would, in

his opinion, "be bound by the highest sense of duty to undertake them."

In 1870 it was decided by Government to spend an additional amount of £100,000,000 on railways. Sir Arthur Cotton challenged the wisdom of that decision, and the East India Association devoted no less than three evenings to an examination of the issues raised by the "Grand Old Man of Irrigation," as he was called.

Soon afterwards the Duke of Argyll moved the second reading of the Governor-General of India Bill in the House of Lords. The Bill contained a clause empowering the Governor-General to nominate qualified Indians to the Civil Service under a system of selection instead of by examination. It was, in a way, a triumph of Dadabhai's prolonged agitation. He was, no doubt, an advocate of free competition and had suggested that a competitive examination for some of the appointments to the service should be held in India and that the selected candidates should be required to go to England and pass further examinations. The Secretary of State had, however, endeavoured to meet the wishes of the Association by a system of nominations under which nine out of sixty appointments would have gone to Indians, whilst the doorway would have remained open for an Indian candidate to enter the service by open competition at the examination held in England.

As a compromise, Dadabhai was prepared to welcome the concession, trifling though it was. It produced, however, a strange ferment in India. The Bombay Branch of the East India Association condemned the system of nomination as humiliating to the country. Moreover, where was the guarantee that the enactment of 1869 would not remain a dead letter as did the Act of 1863 and the Royal Proclamation? Even if its provisions were implemented, where was the guarantee that selection would be based on merit?

Dadabhai, therefore, sent from India a paper on the subject, which was read at a meeting held on July 7, 1869. "I do not suppose," he observed, "that anybody would be disposed to

blame Indians for this suspiciousness, especially when their fears are based on past experience." Yet, justifiable though the reasons were for doubts, Dadabhai considered that they might have reliance upon the distinct pledge given by the Secretary of State. Until the system of nomination was abolished in 1886, there was a constant uproar about the appointments made by Government. To purge recruitment of the abuses inherent in the system and to ensure the selection of the most deserving candidates by competitive examinations in England and India, a decisive battle had to be fought, and was fought, as we shall see, on the floor of the House of Commons, one of the combatants being Dadabhai himself.

## CHAPTER X

### A FRUITFUL MISSION

WITH his heart and soul deeply engaged in the work of the East India Association and his mind full of plans for strengthening its position and extending its operations, Dadabhai arrived in Bombay. On May 5, 1869, he gave his first lecture explaining the objects and work of the Association. Like the lion, a very appropriate symbol of English character, the English public could not be roused easily, but, said Dadabhai, when once roused, no obstacle could stop it. All that was necessary was to make out a good case. "A kind of Providence," wrote Edmund Burke, "has placed in our breasts a hatred of the unjust and cruel in order that we may preserve ourselves from cruelty and injustice." Probably Dadabhai had these words in mind when he told his audience: "The Englishman is incapable of despotism. He might, and often did, carry things with a high hand, but the instinct and love of liberty, the constitutionalism which is born with and ingrained in him, made him at the time of trial recoil from being stigmatized a despot."

Many of us are anxious (he observed) that we should have representative institutions, a *Parliament in India*. That is the goal we must all work to. But can we say that we are at present prepared for such institutions? . . . Is it not necessary for us, especially the educated, to set ourselves to work to educate the people in this important matter? While doing this on one hand, preparing a public opinion, a public voice, and a body of public men, is it not necessary that in England a Society should exist which should have, by its judicious and proper advocacy, by the weight and influence of its conduct, acquired an influence so as to be prepared, when wanted, to fight the last and greatest battle of representation in or for India?

The lecture evoked great enthusiasm. It roused the energy and quickened the imagination of the citizens of Bombay. At a large and influential meeting of representative citizens, held on May 22, the Bombay branch of the Association was formally inaugurated.

Dadabhai then went on a lecturing tour, particularly with a view to enlisting the support of the ruling Chiefs. Some of his Bombay colleagues, such as Dr. Bhau Daji and K. T. Telang, however, fought shy of those potentates who, they believed, were intellectually, morally, and traditionally incapable of sharing the aspirations of young India or of furthering the objects that Dadabhai had in view. He was, however, of opinion, and that opinion is held even to-day by no less eminent a politician than Mahatma Gandhi, that if leaders of society in British India excluded the Princes from their political activity, they would be letting a very useful power run to seed. Men of ability and influence in British India should place their advice and services at the disposal of the feudatory chiefs, and they in turn should lend their financial strength in support of the activities of such leaders for the advancement of India. It was this belief that had prompted him, during the time he had been in England, to help Indian Princes, on several occasions, to tide over their difficulties. It was this belief that prompted them, too, to participate in the arduous work of national progress.

The result of his tour in Kathiawar justified Dadabhai's faith. The Princes received him kindly. Particularly from Cutch, Junagadh, and Gondal he received handsome donations. His Highness, Maharaja Shri Bhagvat Sinhji, Thakore Saheb of Gondal, who was an ardent admirer of Dadabhai and befriended him all his life, convened a public meeting of his subjects to hear the Indian patriot. His address, breathing ardent love for his country, thrilled the good people of that State, who had seldom heard a discourse on problems such as those presented to them, nor listened to such a lucid and saintly speaker.

Within a few months branches of the Association were established in Calcutta, Madras, and other cities, and substantial



donations poured in from the Indian States. Thus, for the first time in history, one might say, Dadabhai was able to arouse a distinctly national feeling in India.

Caustic in his comment on public affairs, trenchant and unsparing in his criticism of the system of government and of the hauteur and indifference of officials, Dadabhai eschewed bitterness. His intense earnestness, his transparent sincerity and selflessness, and his sweet reasonableness and moderation, lent a peculiar charm to his appeal and extorted admiration even from members of the resident English community, intensely sensitive though it then was to criticism of the British administration. There was a consensus of opinion that this ardent patriot, who had dedicated his time and talents to the sole mission of educating the people of India as to their rights, and the people of England as to their responsibilities, was rendering a national service.

About this time Pherozeshah Mehta had returned to Bombay from England. He was one of the protégés of Dadabhai whose sage counsel and inspiration (to quote Mehta's own words) had *formed his character and elevated his ideals whilst he was studying law in England*. Having been an eye-witness of the efforts made by Dadabhai in arousing the interest of the British public in Indian affairs, he told his countrymen, in his own impressive way, what sacrifices had been made by Dadabhai in discharging that patriotic duty. Seeing how a wave of enthusiasm had spread over the entire province and how the patriotic sentiments of the people had been stirred by Dadabhai's speeches, Mehta also started a movement for publicly appreciating the eminent services rendered by Dadabhai. Endorsing a suggestion made in the *Bombay Gazette* by a correspondent that the Sheriff of Bombay should soon give the public an opportunity of expressing their grateful appreciation of Dadabhai's work, he said in a letter to that journal (January 21, 1869):

I can personally testify to the high esteem and regard in which Professor Dadabhai is held and the value set upon his assistance and advice by not a few of the leading Indian Officials "at Home." Indeed, if I were called upon to point out the man most deserving

to be styled the Sir Philip Sidney of Indian Renaissance, I would unhesitatingly single out Professor Dadabhai, and that after a close and personal knowledge of and intercourse with him. In his characteristic simplicity and unostentatiousness he may forget himself in rendering services; let us not forget him in acknowledging them!

The public of Bombay responded cheerfully to the call. Since the days of Ram Mohun Roy, observed the *Native Opinion*, no Indian had achieved a more distinguished reputation both in India and in England. Ram Mohun Roy's reputation was chiefly confined to his own presidency of Bengal, but, said the writer, Dadabhai's name was welcomed by his compatriots in all the provinces, and most by the Indian Chiefs. This was all the more honourable to Dadabhai, as he had been able to achieve that distinction without in any way gratifying their vanity or pandering to their prejudices.

Some of the leading citizens took counsel together, and it was resolved to present an address and a purse to Dadabhai. Why a purse? Because they knew that in his devotion to the cause of his countrymen he had neglected his own interests. They also knew how the genius of eminent politicians was often painfully humiliated and impeded by the straits of embarrassed circumstances. Dadabhai was not the man who would open his lips to anyone about his private troubles, but they felt it was their duty to spare him such embarrassment. A sum of thirty thousand rupees was accordingly collected. Whether Dadabhai would accept such a testimonial to his public spirit was doubtful, but his fellow-citizens had discharged their duty.

Never before or after was a popular demonstration in India in honour of a "political agitator" so vitalized by the participation of the European population as it was on this occasion. In the homage paid to the national hero the heart of the European resident beat in unison with the heart of the populace. There was a unique assemblage of the inhabitants of the City, European and Indian, at the Framji Cowasji Institute, on July 3, 1869, to do honour to Dadabhai. The address recalled the fact that wherever he had been,

whether at home or abroad, he had disinterestedly devoted his time, talents, and energy to the promotion of social, political, and moral welfare of the people of India. It also referred in felicitous terms to his efforts in the cause of popular education and diffusion of useful knowledge, for the spread of vernacular literature and the creation of a taste for reading in the Gujarati-speaking population of the Bombay Presidency.

Dadabhai was overwhelmed with joy when he heard his early activities recalled, one after another, with appreciation and warmth of feeling, but the purse handed to him as a "small token" of his countrymen's esteem and affection was a source of great uneasiness to him.

I accept the testimonials (he observed), which are more proof of your kindness than of my deserts, with great thankfulness. If I could consult my own feelings, I should hesitate to accept the purse. But certain circumstances with which I need not trouble you have made it necessary for me to avail myself of it. I hope, however, I shall not give any reason for dissatisfaction to those kind friends who have particularly wished me to accept the purse, when I may be able to devote the generous gift to some purpose of public usefulness.

Out of the subscribed amount a sum of Rs. 25,000 was presented to Dadabhai, and the balance was kept for the cost of his portrait, which it was proposed to present to the Framji Cowasji Institute later. The greater part of the purse soon went to the East India Association. Owing to a defalcation on the part of an office-bearer of the Association, its financial condition had become so critical that Dadabhai took over the liabilities of that officer. There was not a ray of hope of recovering even a farthing, but there was the satisfaction that he had given a new life to the Institution.

There are men (observed *The Times of India*) whom, if we can feel sure of not spoiling them, the community does itself good by publicly honouring—and there are times, very few, indeed, we admit—when it is suitable and in the true sense profitable to emphasize a unanimous public sentiment by a substantial gift

The conditions which render the testimonial of a community sincere and suitable, and which make appropriate a gift of money for private use, given to a man while yet in the midst of active life, are, we think, to be found in the circumstances which have resulted in the presentation to Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji. If there be any who have looked askance on Mr. Dadabhai's recent lectures and agitation because of their political character, we may remind them that there is very much in connection therewith in which the most conservative and timid can rejoice.

Dadabhai was yet in his prime; he was exposed to all the temptations strewn in the path of men in active public life. The testimonial was, therefore, a test of his moral fibre. It entailed on him new responsibilities and enjoined greater self-denial.

With the satisfaction that his mission on behalf of the East India Association had been crowned with success, beyond expectations, Dadabhai embarked on his fourth voyage for England. Little did he then realize that besides instilling new aspirations and hopes in British India his political propaganda had created an awakening among the Indian Princes. Much less did he realize the extent to which the sphere of his influence had been extended during those few months and the warmth of feeling of respect and admiration which his ability, integrity, and patriotic fervour had evoked from the Feudatory Chiefs whom he had set thinking as to the extent to which his propaganda could be helpful in adjusting the relations between their *durbars* and the Paramount Power. Still less could he have dreamt that the contacts thus established would give quite an unexpected turn to his own career and bring him back to India to offer advice and assistance to several Princes and to be installed on the *gadi* of Prime Minister of Baroda.

Arriving in England, Dadabhai attended a meeting of the Association, held on October 29, 1869, at which a paper on the question of means of transport in India was discussed. Welcoming the decision of Government to construct railways in future by raising loans instead of by giving concessions to private enter-

prise and guaranteeing payment of interest on their stock, he pointed out that under the system of giving companies a guarantee, all the losses arising from waste fell upon the State, while the profit mostly went to the guaranteed companies.

The question of adulteration of cotton in Bombay, the cottonopolis of India, then came under discussion. The Bombay Cotton Act of 1869 contained penal provisions for preventing adulteration. In a paper on the subject, Dadabhai contended that no case had been made out for such stringent and hampering penal provisions as were embodied in that Act. The discussion on the paper had the desired effect; the obnoxious measure was dropped.

During the years 1870 and 1871 the principal topic of discussion was Indian Finance. Within six weeks, between June 15, and July 28, 1870, no less than four papers dealing with the subject in all its bearings were read and discussed at great length; one on "Indian Finance" by I. T. Prichard, another on "Public Works in India" by Sir Bartle Frere, another on "Wants and Means of India" by Dadabhai, and the fourth on the "Finance of India" by Sir Charles Trevelyan. All these papers had a direct bearing on the subject which Dadabhai had most at heart—the impoverishment of India—and their importance demands separate treatment.

In the year 1871 the number of members of the Association ran into four figures and its influence began to be felt in Parliament. At Dadabhai's instance, Henry Fawcett, dubbed "the Member for India," had begun what became the annual custom of moving a resolution in the House of Commons favouring "simultaneous examination" for recruitment to the Indian Civil Service. Moreover, whenever Indian questions were discussed in Parliament, several M.P.s prompted by members of the Association, or inspired by its discussions, spoke with knowledge of the wants and wishes of the people and brought informed criticism to bear on the solution of Indian problems.

The Civil Service question loomed large in the proceedings for the year 1871. Amongst the other subjects dealt with during the

year may be mentioned "Popular Education in India," by William Tayler; and "The Means of ascertaining Public Opinion on Indian Affairs" by Sir Bartle Frere, a paper which was discussed at three sittings. In the year 1872 I. T. Prichard raised the question of "Representation of India in Parliament" This was followed by papers on "The Progressive Capabilities of the Races of India in Reference to Political and Industrial Development" by Hyde Clarke, "What the True Interests of Manchester really are in India" by Dr. George Birdwood, and on "Trusteeship as the Basis of Imperial Policy" by Major Evans Bell.

The work of the Association was growing apace, it needed a centre; it had to equip and maintain a library, it had to build up an endowment fund to ensure its stability. The funds brought by Dadabhai from India were not sufficient for these requirements. He was once more proceeding to India; would he be good enough to send the hat round? Dadabhai cheerfully undertook the begging mission. Immediately on arrival in India, he made arrangements for placing the branch of the Association at Bombay on an efficient footing. He then toured Kathiawar and Rajputana to collect funds and to interest the Princes and the people of the States in the cause of the Association.

The City of Bombay was then convulsed by the powerful agitation of the people for reform in the machinery of municipal administration. Dadabhai threw himself into the movement, presided at a great meeting of the Bombay Ratepayers, and headed the deputation to the Governor of Bombay to present a memorial adopted at the meeting.

The Council of the East India Association was warm in its acknowledgment of the assistance rendered by Dadabhai at all times and in the most critical circumstances. It was stated in a minute that without such assistance it would have been almost impossible for the Association to carry on its work. The Council also placed on record its gratification at the large accession to the list of life members, which Dadabhai had been able to secure.

Even so handsome an acknowledgment could hardly have conveyed to the public an adequate idea of the infinite pains taken

by the hard-working Secretary in approaching people to join the Association. Stenographers were not then to be had: Dadabhai had to carry on his voluminous correspondence and to write his minutes and contributions to the Press in his own hand. Likewise, he addressed numerous appeals to friends, prominent citizens, and Princes, asking them to help the Association in its work of national importance.

Another glowing tribute was paid to Dadabhai at the annual meeting of the Association on July 17, 1872. In moving a vote of thanks to him, the Chairman of the Council, E. B. Eastwick, observed:

In respect of the Council's remarks regarding the Covenanted Civil Service, I cannot help thinking that in Mr. Dadabhai we have a gentleman who could have reflected honour on the Indian Government, had he been in their Service. Indeed, I can honestly say that I have never met a man who showed greater ability and more pure love of his country than Mr. Naoroji.

## CHAPTER XI

# THE DRAIN

SUNK in abject poverty, India had the costliest and the slothfullest administration in the world in the 'sixties of the past century. The inevitable consequence of a foreign rule everywhere is persistent transfer of wealth from the country of the people to that of their rulers. In the case of poor India the extravagance of the authorities intensified the drain. A very large portion of her revenue was carried away annually to England, depleting the national capital. Of that fact people in England had no conception. Dadabhai, therefore, set himself the arduous task of proving the appalling poverty and distress of the people and the astounding indifference and extravagance of their rulers. It demanded patient study of details, intelligent research, and exceptional knowledge, skill, and reasoning in marshalling facts and figures. Fortunately for India, he had the requisite qualities, including a voracious appetite for work and inexhaustible energy to explore every avenue of research. Pursuit of commerce had now been subordinated by him to the quest of means to provide food for the half-starved millions of his country, the ordinary business man's casual contemplation of the world's output and trade statistics had been superseded by the critical publicist's close scrutiny of the data concerning the production of the country and the income per head of population. The whole foundation of administration, financial and general, rested upon that one fact—the produce of the country, the ultimate result of all capital, labour and industry.

To work out the result was then equivalent to making bread without flour. Official information on the subject was inadequate and misleading; Blue books were compiled without the least idea of providing information on the issues with which the expert



mathematician wished to come to grips. The sources of non-official information were practically dry. The Universities in India had not yet popularized the study of political economy; and books on the subject were a novelty. In the year 1870, the only journal in India which gave statistics concerning the agricultural, mineral, and other sources of national wealth was the *Indian Economist*, edited by Robert Knight. It, however, did not give Dadabhai the information he wanted. Detailed classification of the cultivated area was not available; nor were there estimates of the average yield per acre for all the different crops. There were price statistics, but incomplete, and scarcely accurate for minor crops.

Not only was information lacking, but there were also handicaps in the approach to the sources of information. Not all the barriers could, however, keep the indefatigable explorer off the track. Toilsome and tiresome though the journey, and doubtful the chances of reaching the goal, he dedicated all his energy to the up-hill task. Being an adept at ferreting out the truth for himself, he gathered from far and near all possible information bearing on the question, subjected the evidence thus collected to a minute analysis, and came to the startling conclusion that the yearly income per head of the population was only 40s., roughly equivalent to Rs. 20.

The gross land tax for 1870-71 had been estimated at £21,000,000. On the basis of one-eighth of the gross produce, the gross production was estimated at about £168,000,000. To these were added receipts for opium, salt, coal, and other sources of revenue, and the total of the raw produce of the country raised to £200,000,000. To this sum Dadabhai added £100,000,000 to include the proceeds of manufacturing industries, and of excise on spirits, augmenting the total to £300,000,000. The population of British India being 150,000,000, it gave 40s. per head.

This preliminary analysis of the economic situation formed the subject-matter of a paper on "Wants and Means of India," read before the East India Association on July 27, 1870. It was only the first step in his memorable investigation and exposition of

the difficult problem. He knew it demanded more detailed study and scrutiny, but it was not necessary for that reason to withhold from the public the results of his inquiry such as he could then put forward.

Dadabhai's paper was, however, only one of a series of papers on Indian Finance. To put the case in the perspective that is needed, it is necessary to recall a few broad facts concerning the position in India, during those days, as regards the financial resources of the country, the machinery of administration, and the system of control. In the history of public finance no Chancellor of the Exchequer was set a task more difficult than that which fell to the lot of the Finance Minister for India during the years following the assumption by the Crown of the responsibility of governing India. None was so shackled as he in confronting the tremendous difficulties involved in the governance of a vast country—the sixth in extent and second in population in the world. Before the administration of those territories was taken over by the Crown, it was in the hands of a business corporation pecuniarily interested in the efficient management of the estate. The spirit of commerce governed their policy. They did not consider it their duty to provide amenities, but to furnish a clean balance sheet was their bounden duty. The new trustees were not so keen on keeping a watchful eye on the profit and loss account; they had many other affairs of State to look after; so they made over the management to their nominees. Responsibility divided meant no responsibility.

Under the new regime, a legislative measure, after it had passed the Council in India and had been confirmed by the Viceroy, could be lightly vetoed in England. Within the experience of the East India Association, a child as it was of five summers, there was an instance in which a budget had been rejected by the Home Government and flashed back to Calcutta to be recast. The Indian Chancellor of the Exchequer had to serve two masters, the Local Government and the Home Government, and he had to prepare a budget which both could relish. Both would fling their platters in his face, if the meal was not to their taste.

As, however, the Home Government had the last word in the matter, he preferred to follow the menu likely to agree with his masters in England.

Under such a system of patchwork, lacking unity of design, the financial administration of India could hardly be expected to give satisfaction. During the days of which we are speaking, India enjoyed unprecedented immunity from internal and external disturbances; nevertheless there were deficits necessitating enhanced taxation. The revenue had increased, but the expenditure had grown in still greater proportion. Lord Mayo had to deplore the fact that from the year 1866 to 1870 the Government of India had been plunged in a chronic state of deficit.

The confusion of the Government of India afforded a good reason for demanding an enquiry into its finances. Under the inspiration of Dadabhai and Naoroji Furdoonji, the Bombay branch of the Association took the lead. It sent a petition to the Secretary of State, praying that the finances of India might be placed on a satisfactory footing. It also sent Naoroji Furdoonji to England to enlist support in favour of the petition. The memorialists protested against the increasing burden of taxation and asked for the abolition of the income-tax. It does not appear to have occurred to them that the class bias underlying this proposal was scarcely befitting champions of the poverty-stricken millions of India!

The parent Association had at the same time embarked on a complete survey of the situation. After Dadabhai's paper was read, the President, Sir Charles Trevelyan, gave a very illuminating discourse on the subject. Twelve years of his life had been spent in the administrative service of India and nineteen more years in the British Treasury. He was then appointed Governor of Madras, and finally Finance Minister in India. Speaking, therefore, with unrivalled experience, he expressed his concern that a real crisis had arisen. He welcomed the petition of the inhabitants of Bombay; they had approached Parliament in the most dutiful and constitutional manner and were at least as well entitled to a respectful hearing as any English constituency would

have been. The doyen of Indian finance could not, however, accept Dadabhai's description of the Home charges, as "tribute," "drain," and "political remittances," nor would he subscribe to the Indian critic's observations concerning the "impoverishing effect of foreign rule." What were the Home charges? Mostly stores supplied to India; interest on money borrowed in England and pensions. Were they not legitimate charges for goods supplied and services rendered? Was there anything objectionable in their nature, although there were, he admitted, certain evil tendencies of foreign rule?

There was, no doubt, lavishness in respect of salaries and leave allowances, and in the immense gathering of civil and military officers from all parts of India at the hill stations during nearly half the year. The ever-growing military expenditure, which absorbed nearly a third of the gross revenue, was more than the ordinary military expenditure of the great military monarchies of Europe, more even than the expenditure by which England maintained the security not only of the country but also of the whole of the British Colonies, including Canada. Even the Controllor-General of Military Expenditure had remarked that military history presented "no instance of any army so constituted, or of one so costly."

The Public Works Department was another illustration of unparalleled extravagance. Public works were excellent things, but there were other things equally good or better—financial integrity, for instance. When the choice was between more or less of public works and bankruptcy, they might well pause and consider. The ex-Finance Member then related a pathetic story:

When Lord Auckland returned to England from India, he selected Colonel Irvine of the Bengal Engineers for the Office of Director of Works at the Admiralty. Colonel Irvine had not been in office many months before he came to me at the Treasury, and said, with real distress, "I cannot get on here; they care no more about spending a crore<sup>1</sup> of rupees than we do a lac." He died within three days. I do not say that was the cause of his

<sup>1</sup> One hundred lacs, i.e., 10,000,000.

death, but no doubt the harassment arising from that state of things had something to do with it.

One of the causes of the unsatisfactory state of Indian finance was the imperfect nature of the accounts. There was, moreover, no periodical review of the administration, as was the case when the East India Company had to appear every twenty years before Parliament as a suppliant for the renewal of their Charter. After the transfer, the auditor and the accountant had become one. The only control that could be exercised was self-control.

So far as Parliament has exercised any influence in the matter, it had facilitated and increased the interested pressure upon the India Office, for, until the conscience of Parliament is roused by a formal public proceeding, powerful interests are always more or less able to use it as an organ for their designs. Departmental rule has not proved strong enough to protect the public interests of India against great class-interests, such as the army, trade and manufactures, and native princes.

Reform, however, never came anywhere from within. It was time, urged Sir Charles, that Parliament should resume the function of auditor and judge. The Association resolved to present a memorial to Parliament, praying for the appointment of a Select Committee of both Houses to inquire into the general administration of Her Majesty's Indian territories both at home and in India, especially in relation to the conduct of the Finance Department.

Before the decision was taken, Dadabhai had to make a personal explanation. A member of the Association had sent him a letter, in which, while agreeing with him as to the main principles embodied in his paper, the member had criticized some portions as "having a possible seditious and mischievous tendency."

First of all I say (said Dadabhai) no native from one end of India to the other could be found more loyal than I am to the British rule, because it is my sincere conviction, which I have expressed often, that the salvation of India, its future prosperity,

its civilization, and its political elevation, all depend on the continuance of the British rule. It is because I wish that the British rule should be long continued in India, and that it is good that the rulers should know native feeling and opinions, that I come forward and speak my mind freely and boldly.

Reverting to the subject under discussion he observed:

The misunderstanding which I want to set right is simply this. Here is a foreign power ruling over India, producing certain social, moral, political, and economic effects. I want to draw the attention of the English nation to the economic effects of its rule. I certainly should never be so absurd as to ask English gentlemen to go out and serve India and take nothing for it; but when a country comes under a foreign rule, certain economic results *must* follow, one of which is, that a drain must necessarily take place from the country ruled to the country ruling. Now the question is, whether the economic injury of this drain (no matter how legitimate this drain may be as far as the recipients are concerned) in the case of India is made up or not by the management of British rule. If it is, it is very necessary that the natives should see that, and the sooner this question is fairly settled the better for England as well as for India.

William Tayler said that he could see nothing either seditious or mischievous in the paper. It seemed to him to be a sound, practical, and sensible exposition of what Dadabhai sincerely believed to be the difficulties and embarrassments of India, arising out of the fact that India was under a foreign Government, and that there was a drain from year to year upon its resources. All his observations were quite legitimate and were only what they would have wished an independent Indian gentleman to lay before them.

Thus encouraged by British friends, Dadabhai took every opportunity throughout his life to bring home to the British public the avoidable drain on the resources of his motherland, and to plead for redress. In the intensity of such pleading his own vitality was drained to the last drop.

Soon after the resolution of the Council of the East India Association a Parliamentary Committee was appointed to inquire into the financial condition of India. It was another feather in Dadabhai's cap. He promptly submitted for its consideration "a few remarks"—just sixteen thousand words!

The financial administration of any country, like all other human institutions, required four important elements: material, head to design, hand to execute, and sound principles of design and execution. As regards material, the question was: "Did India produce enough to supply, without hardship or privation, both her ordinary wants as a nation and her extraordinary and peculiar want to remit to a distant country a portion of her produce as the natural result of a foreign rule?" The answer was an emphatic No. She did not produce enough even for the daily food of her children, much less for all other needs. If the India Office should prove that Dadabhai was wrong, well and good; if not, said he, "no ingenious device of even ten Wilsons or Temples will relieve the Financial Administration of its difficulties unless the Indian legislators and financiers possess the divine power of creating something out of nothing."

Once more he urged arguments in justification of his rough estimate of the total production of India. The proportion of distribution varied from province to province and between district and district. On the whole, therefore, the average income per head of the poor labouring population of all the provinces, excepting the more favourably situated Bombay and the Punjab, could hardly exceed 25s. Complacent assertions of officials to the contrary were worth nothing; he had taken his stand on facts and figures such as he could obtain. For testing his conclusion, detailed statistics were needed, which it should be the duty of compilers of Administration Reports to give. How minutely he wished the subject to be inquired into and what a multiplicity of data he asked for, can be seen from a single illustration. In order that the average estimate of the income of the unskilled labourer

might be correctly estimated, he suggested the compilation of an annual return showing

the number of people living upon unskilled labour, and rates of wages, with details; the number of adults (male and female) capable of work, say between twenty-one and fifty years of age; the number of children under twelve years of age; the average wage earned by males and females of the above-mentioned different classifications (calculating the average on the correct principle of taking the number of labourers earning each rate into account); the number of the sick and infirm; and the number of days during the year that the different rates of wages are earned.

The poverty of the country once admitted, the question of remedy resolved itself into the following heads: 1. Provision of capital necessary for all public works of a permanent character required to increase production and to facilitate distribution; 2. A just adjustment of the financial relations between India and England so that the political drain might be reasonably diminished; 3. The best way of attracting capital and enterprise to utilize the vast cultivable waste lands; and 4. The best way of increasing the intelligence of the people by a comprehensive plan of national education.

The head which designed the financial legislation was the supreme Legislative Council, while social legislation was designed by the Local Councils. All these Councils had a controlling head in the India Office Council in London. The question was: "Could any legislation ever do its work satisfactorily where the opinions, feelings, and thoughts of the people paying the taxes were not freely represented?"

Dadabhai then asked: "Could the Services be efficient without a proper proportion of Indians in all grades? Could the English officials, no matter how clever, manage Indians as well as Indians of the same standing, ability, and integrity?" The question had also to be considered in the light of the financial implications involved. The mere fact that all the earnings of the Indian officials remained in the country was in itself a financial advantage to the country.



Finally, as regards principles of design and execution, the questions for consideration were: (1) whether the burden of taxation was equally distributed over the shoulders of all classes of people; and (2) whether the expenditure was not capable of being largely curtailed without impairing the efficiency or strength of British rule. For a solution of these questions it was necessary that the Committee should examine the principle and necessity of each item of receipt and expenditure. For instance, in dealing with the land revenue, the principles on which the rates of assessment were based should be examined. Were the principles sound? If so, were the rates such as to encourage increase of cultivation, to lead to increase in capital, and thereby to increase in production and prosperity?

"Was the burden of taxation on the cultivator equitable, compared with the burden borne by other classes?" Government claimed the rights of a landlord; did that mean that Government must have a certain portion of the produce, "even though the exactions were inequitably higher than those from other classes of people?" Or, was the Government demand upon land to be adjusted on the principle that land should contribute its equitable quota with all other industries towards the revenue required for state purposes? Because richer interests could resort to agitation and make themselves heard, should the poor labourer and cultivator, who could not, be squeezed more than the agitators?

Was the machinery for the collection of the land revenue economical? Whilst instituting a comparison between the burden of taxation in India and that in other countries, Lord Mayo came to the conclusion that the burden was not "crushing." India, according to his calculations, paid only 1s. 10d. per head per annum against Turkey's 7s. 9d., Russia's 12s. 2d., Spain's 18s. 3d., Austria's 19s. 7d., and Italy's 17s. What idea His Lordship attached to the word "crushing," Dadabhai could not say, but he observed:

His Lordship seems to forget the very first premiss that the total production of the country is admitted to be 40s. per head . . . so that living from hand to mouth, and that on "scanty subsistence" (in the words of Lord Lawrence) the very touch of

famine carries away hundreds of thousands. Is not this in itself as "crushing" to any people as it can possibly be? And yet out of this wretched income they have to pay taxation as well.

Then he introduced his drain theory.

Whatever revenue is raised by the other countries, for instance, the £70,000,000 by England, the whole of it returns back to the people and remains in the country; and therefore the national capital, upon which the production of a country depends, does not suffer diminution; while, on account of India being subject to a foreign rule, out of £50,000,000, of revenue raised every year, some £12,000,000 or more are carried away to England, and the national capital—or, in other words, its capability of production—is continually diminished year after year.

The method adopted by Lord Mayo, continued Dadabhai, was not the "fairest way" of comparing the taxation of one country with that of another. One should ascertain "the proportion of the amount which the Government of the country took for the purposes of administration." If that test were applied, the result would show that England raised £70,000,000 out of the national income of about £100,000,000—that is, about 8 per cent, or about £2 10s. per head, from an income of about £30 per head; whereas the Government of India raised £50,000,000 out of a national income of £300,000,000—that is, about 16 per cent, or 6s. 8d. per head, out of an income of 40s. per head. Without the data concerning the population and national income of the countries mentioned by Lord Mayo, Dadabhai could not say from what income per head they met their burden of taxation; he could, therefore, only make the general observation that while a ton might not be a burden to an elephant, a few pounds might crush a child. The capacity to bear a burden was not to be measured by the percentage of taxation, but by the abundance, or otherwise, of the means of income to pay it from.

Though an expert at figures, Dadabhai was yet a novice in matters concerning the procedure of parliamentary committees. When, therefore, he appeared as a witness before the Select Committee, together with Naoroji Furdoonji, on behalf of the

East India Association, he could not carry the Committee with him on the first day of the evidence. It is best, however, that he should relate the story himself. Speaking at a meeting, held in Bombay on September 21, 1885, to consider the question of raising a memorial to Professor Fawcett, he gave his personal reminiscence of that incident:

When I appeared before the Finance Committee in England in 1873, I had perhaps the rashness of writing a letter beforehand of what I wanted to give my evidence upon. What I said there, somehow or other, did not suit Mr. Ayrton, the Chairman of the Committee, and he hindered and hampered me in every way. Before I went to the Committee I saw Mr. Fawcett, who was always sympathizing with us, and I laid before him the notes which I wanted to submit to the Committee. He considered them very carefully and told me that that was the very thing that ought to be brought to the Committee. But, strange to say, when I went before the Committee Mr. Ayrton chose to decide that that was just the thing that was not to be brought before the Committee. On the first day I was hardly able to give evidence of what I wanted to say. But the next day, when it came to Mr. Fawcett's turn to examine me, in a series of judicious and pointed questions, he brought out all that I had to say in a brief and clear manner.

The report of the Select Committee was eagerly awaited, but the sudden dissolution of Parliament, early in 1874, owing to the defeat of the Government on the long-disputed question of higher education in Ireland, led to the Committee's extinction. It had not even completed the inquiry. Meanwhile, finding the country sinking under chronic deficit, Lord Mayo, as Viceroy, strove strenuously for financial solvency. Mainly by decentralization on a provincial basis, subject to central control, he succeeded in leaving a firmly established surplus. It was, however, merely the first step along the path of financial reform. Dadabhai had yet to write many a minute, ask for many an inquiry, and himself sit on a Royal Commission, not only to examine the real wants of the people of India, but also to suggest an equitable adjustment of relations between India and Britain.

## CHAPTER XII

### TO THE HELP OF A MAHARAJA

**I**N a wretched little house in Padra, near Baroda, there lay captive a member of the royal house of the Gaekwars, praying hourly for the death of his brother. Having been suspected of conspiracy to get rid of the ruling prince, his brother Khunderao, by sorcery, poison or violence, he had been deprived of his liberty. His friends sent petitions to the British Resident and to the Government of India; but to no purpose. The only hope of release lay in his brother's death.

On November 25, 1870, the prisoner was more restless than ever. After several sleepless hours spent in swearing and raving, he felt exhausted. Just at that moment there was a rap on the door. A voice came from outside, "Sircar!"

"Sircar!" muttered the prisoner, Mulharrao Gaekwar. "What mockery is this?" Then instantly, as though he had guessed the object of the visit at so early an hour, he stepped forward and said, "Come in."

It was an officer from the British Resident in Baroda, deputed to inform the royal prisoner of the sudden death of his brother Khunderao and of the intention of the Government of India to put him on the throne, subject to confirmation by the Government of Queen Victoria. Mulharrao received the news calmly.

Released from the dungeon, and placed on the *gadi* of this great State, what sort of a legacy did this prince inherit? Misgovernment had then reached its climax in Baroda. A coterie of intriguers and blood-suckers had seized the reins of office. Under their misrule the impoverished and oppressed people had been clamouring for years for redress.

"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." How much more uneasy should that head have been whereon was placed the crown

of a kingdom so frightfully misgoverned? But had Mulharrao a head? Had he any sort of cultural consciousness? Was there a moral background to his thoughts and desires? Normal intelligence he undoubtedly possessed; the faculty of discernment, too, was not wanting. Prolonged imprisonment and the misery incidental thereto had, however, unhinged his mind. It was in such an unbalanced attitude that he received the joyful news that the author of his misfortunes was dead. Holding the reins of office, he found himself pulled in different ways by different parties. His friends, who had remained faithful to him during his long term of imprisonment, now aspired to positions of trust and responsibility. Mulharrao considered it his duty to reward all such adherents. In view of the possibility of a posthumous son being born to one of the Maharanees of the deceased Maharaja, another party had sprung up in the Durbar, consisting of men who were openly in support of the prospective mother. There was, also, a third group consisting of trimmers, who tried to please both sides.

Such *khatpat*, as it is called, was not uncommon in feudatory States; Mulharrao was capable enough to see through the intrigues of the different cabals and to handle each tactfully. But the besetting sin of the man was his weakness for women. Parents of pretty girls, panderers and harpies easily ingratiated themselves with the Maharaja and were placed in lucrative positions. The management of the State revenues was treated as a personal *giras*, and enormous sums were taken as *nazarana* from those to whom the revenues were farmed out and who in turn enhanced fourfold the exactions from the public. People abandoned their homes and estates to escape oppression. There were large deficits, which were made good by robbing the hereditary Sirdars of their dues. The administration of justice was a mockery; whoever offered the highest sum received a verdict in his favour.

Intoxicated by the unfettered powers and unrestrained pleasures placed within his reach, Mulharrao scarcely realized that the State of Baroda was getting more rotten every day. The British Residency could have pulled him up; but it allowed matters to

drift from bad to worse. Probably this was the result of the policy of non-intervention then pursued. The Paramount Power did not object to the selection of the Maharaja's advisers and executive officers, who were taken from the scum of society; nor did it check the oppression practised before the very eyes of a British Resident.

Nemesis, was, however, slowly overtaking the depraved ruler. It was a custom that, when a Durbar was held in Baroda, the Gackwar gave the Governor of Bombay the seat on his left. In no other Durbar did such a custom exist. Evidently, when Sir Seymour Fitzgerald, the Governor of Bombay, was thus seated at the Durbar, held by Mulharrao in the year 1871, he felt he did not receive the courtesy due to Queen Victoria's representative in that territory. It was, therefore, stated in a *yad* (note) received by the Maharaja from the Resident, in February 1872, that it was the wish of the Bombay Government that in the same way in which the Governor accorded honour to the Gackwar in his own Durbar the Gackwar should honour the Governor of Bombay as the representative of the Crown and accord him a seat on the right. "Why should I?" exclaimed the indignant potentate. He was not concerned with the practice followed in the other States; nor did he attach any importance to the principle of reciprocity. The special prerogative enjoyed by his State was in recognition of valuable assistance received from it by the British Government; he was not prepared to accept any other arrangement. Her Majesty's representatives in India, on the other hand, were adamant. Another note was sent to the Maharaja, stating that the Viceroy had been much grieved that the Gackwar "did not fairly consider the subject."

On the one hand the overlords refused to listen to any further argument; on the other hand the irrepressible Maharaja was determined not to yield. Meanwhile, he received an invitation to attend the Viceroy's Durbar in Bombay in the month of November 1872. Fearing that he might not be offered a seat befitting his dignity, he decided not to go. His courtiers feared that this would be taken as a deliberate insult to the Viceroy.

They earnestly appealed to him to accept the invitation. He, however, refused to budge an inch. Then some of the Durbaris suggested that he should consult Dadabhai in this matter.

How did Dadabhai come to be in favour with the Durbar? He had visited Baroda only a few months before, during his tour in Western India, to seek the Maharaja's patronage for the work of the East India Association, but had returned empty-handed. He was, however, known to be a willing worker in the cause of his motherland and anxious to enhance the prestige of the Indian States as well as of British India. Therefore, when Dadabhai visited Baroda, he had been well received and presented with a "Court dress" with the blessings of the Maharaja, although he got nothing for the Association from the depleted coffers of the State. Dadabhai happened to be in Indore when the courtiers of Baroda were in great perplexity; hence their suggestion to the Prince to send for him. Mulharrao agreed.

A telegram was sent to Dadabhai, stating that the Maharaja wished to see him urgently. On his arrival, Mulharrao asked his Ministers to place the facts before him and to have a preliminary discussion with him. After hearing them, he was of opinion that it was essential that Mulharrao should attend the Durbar.

"Maharaj," said Dadabhai, "you must attend the Durbar; I see no other way out of it. The Viceroy must not think that you have deliberately avoided to attend."

"But I have resolved *not* to go. We invited you here to find out a way to carry out my resolve, without offending the Viceroy."

"I can find none, Your Highness," said Dadabhai, gently but firmly. "It would give me great pleasure to fall in with your wishes, but I cannot conscientiously ask you to do what, I fear, might be harmful to you."

With these words Dadabhai took leave of the Maharaja. The Durbaris saw him depart in solemn silence. The Maharaja was riding for a fall; who could stop him? One of the members of the staff ran after Dadabhai and implored him to tarry awhile and to think of some way of averting the impending disaster to the State. Dadabhai sat in a corner, taxing his mind as to how

the Maharaja could be shielded from the consequences of the deliberate insult he was determined to hurl against the Queen's representative. Within a few minutes he seemed to have made up his mind.

"I have found a way," he said, "but I shall speak about it only to His Highness."

The Durbaris were agreeably surprised. They knew that it was as difficult to dislodge the hard-headed Parsi from a position once taken up by him as it was to expect their own wilful Chief to give way. What could have so suddenly brought about a change?

Some days before, the Maharanee Sahib Mhalsabai, had prematurely given birth to a girl. The infant did not live for more than a week; the mother was unwell. With these facts in the background, Dadabhai waited on Mulharrao for the second time. The disconcerted ruler was overjoyed. "I understand you have at last found a good excuse," said he; "tell me at once what it is!"

"I advise Your Highness to go to the Durbar, but if you must find an excuse not to go, you have one in the illness of the Maharanee Sahib Mhalsabai. You may send a telegram stating that having given birth to a child prematurely, she is very ill; that her condition is worse on account of the death of that child and that in the circumstances you cannot attend the Durbar, leaving her in such a precarious state of health."

Greatly relieved, the Maharaja nodded acquiescence. He then asked Dadabhai to suggest what could be done in regard to the larger issue raised by the Bombay Government about his seat in his own Durbar. The Government of Bombay wanted to humiliate him; he would never submit to it. As regards that issue, Dadabhai sympathized with Mulharrao. It might have been vanity, but for once the depraved prince appeared to be thinking in terms of self-respect and dignity. Dadabhai concurred in his opinion that there was no necessity for a departure from the practice which had been in vogue for half a century.

"Maharaj," he said, "a good case can be made out for the



maintenance of the *status quo ante*. I would advise you to send a memorial to the Viceroy and another to the Secretary of State."

"Who can draft it better than you?" said Mulharrao, smilingly. "Will you do it?"

Dadabhai agreed. In the despatch which he drew up he recalled the varied services rendered by the Baroda State to the British from the earliest times down to the dark days of the Sepoys' Mutiny, when the Gaekwar had identified his own cause with that of the British Government. It was in view of the "exceptionally" cordial and loyal relations of the State with the British Government that it had been "exceptionally" honoured in several ways, one of which was the privilege allowed to the head of the State to sit on the right in his own Durbar. That honour was enjoyed by it from the very first occasion on which a Governor of Bombay, Mountstuart Elphinstone, was received in 1820. Since then, with all the Governors who had visited the Durbar, with Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General, and with His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh at Bombay, the Gaekwar had sat on the right on the sofa. Why should the State thus honoured in the past be now dragged down from its high and proud position, as if it had been guilty of some disloyal act? Then Dadabhai turned to his Bible—Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858—and recalled the words: "We shall respect the rights and dignity and honour of Native Princes as our own." On that promise the Maharaja relied, as he also did on the generous feelings of the Viceroy.

The Government of Bombay forwarded both the documents to the Viceroy. In reply, the Queen's representative wrote to his "honoured and valued friend" that the question having been finally disposed of by the Government of India, it could not be reopened. The despatch addressed to the Secretary of State was not forwarded. Another memorial, drafted by Dadabhai, was then sent direct by the Maharaja to the Secretary of State in July 1873. Before, however, it could be dealt with officially a crisis developed in Baroda, involving the Prince in undreamt of indignity.

For the earlier despatch drafted by him and for some other

work done by Dadabhai concerning long-pending cases the Maharaja ordered the payment of a reward of Rs. 50,000 to Dadabhai. Even for a Prince it was too big a remuneration to offer for the work done. Probably, although he did not give any hint of it, the astute ruler thought that a man like Dadabhai might be very useful to him in fighting his battles in England. Dadabhai was, however, taken aback.

"Sircar, I beg to be excused," he said; "my position is very delicate. I have come to India to collect funds for the East India Association. I cannot accept anything from anyone except for that Association."

"But this is an honorarium—*your* fee for work done by you as my counsellor and guide."

"It is very generous of you to say that, Your Highness. It is a pleasure and a privilege to serve you."

"Now Dadabhai," observed Mulharrao, half earnestly, half jestingly, "whilst in one breath, in the memorial which you have drawn up, you stand up for my dignity, in another breath you are hurling an indignity at me! Have I not the right to pay you for the work actually done by you? Why should I incur your obligation?"

"I beg your pardon, Your Highness," said Dadabhai. "I meant nothing of the sort. In doing such work I feel I am privileged to render a service to my country, for what is a wrong to the Durbar of an Indian Prince is a wrong done to the country."

"You should have been a lawyer, Dadabhai," observed the Maharaja; "but listen, you have children to bring up. You cannot overlook their interests. Since you do not accept your fee, I order that the amount shall be given to you on trust for your children. Now, no further argument."

With bowed head Dadabhai submitted in silence. But at heart he was uneasy. It was a princely reward, too princely for a trifling service; what would people think of it? He consulted his friends. They saw no objection to the sum being accepted as a gift for his children. Kharshedji Nasarwanji Cama also wrote that he saw no reason why Dadabhai should interfere in the arrange-

ment that the amount should be held in trust for his children. He enclosed the opinion of another friend, Sorabjee Shahpurjee (Bengalee), to the same effect. Dadabhai was, however, still doubtful as to the propriety of it.

Returning to England, Dadabhai consulted his British friends. They, too, saw no harm in it. But people will talk. A public character was given to what was a private affair. It was rumoured that he had undertaken to work as the Gaekwar's agent and had gone to England to fight the Maharaja's case and to induce the East India Association to take up the cudgels on behalf of the Maharaja. The same significance was attached to the sums subscribed by other Princes to the funds of the Association. Greatly distressed, Dadabhai considered it necessary for his peace of mind to make a public statement on the subject, and seized the opportunity at a meeting of the East India Association held on August 6, 1873. The following extract from the records of proceedings of that date shows how he unburdened his mind on the question of that gift:

With regard to the donations given by the Princes of India, there was, it appeared, some misapprehension. . . . There was absolutely no condition, no promise, no hope held out that the donors should have any personal interest or benefit from the efforts made by the Association in England. He wished it to be distinctly understood that there were no more conditions attached to the donations than to the ordinary yearly subscriptions or donations of any of the members present, except that the gifts were princely, as became the gifts of Princes. . . . He felt the great delicacy of the position he held as regards the East India Association, and hence his first resolve to accept no pecuniary recompense even in the form so considerably urged by His Highness. Subsequently, however, he consulted with some of his best friends in India—friends who would, he knew, care more for his honour than his pocket—and they told him that in their opinion he need not have the slightest hesitation in accepting the provision for his children, especially as he had earned it by honest and valued labour. Still, he was undecided in the matter, and he had since consulted some of his English friends in England,

who, after hearing all the circumstances of the case, one and all said as strongly as possible that he should not have the slightest hesitation in the matter, and that he was bound to allow his children the benefit of his work . he would distinctly repeat that he had always felt his position in regard to the Association to be so peculiarly delicate, that although it was probable that he might have experienced little difficulty in making two or three lacs if he had chosen to undertake agencies, he had throughout maintained strictly his resolve that his character and conduct should be entirely above suspicion, and therefore to all such offers he had always replied that he had a broader work to do, and that he could not serve God and Mammon at the same time

Misgovernment in Baroda compelled the Paramount Power to appoint a Commission to investigate various charges of misconduct and misrule brought against the Gaekwar. He feared that this was the beginning of the end. For the first time he realized the urgency of putting his house in order. It was, however, a task beyond him and his Ministers. In despair he looked round for a Hercules, his eye fell on Dadabhai

It was the greatest surprise of Dadabhai's life. Was he a Hercules? The capital of the Maharaja was famous for its Samsons, whose physical strength and acrobatic feats were the wonder of India. Many a giant-like *mal* (wrestler) basked in the patronage of the Baroda Durbar. No less was this Court noted for its mental gymnasts, adepts in the art of rope-dancing and high vaulting in the arena of statecraft. The Maharaja himself was no mean athlete in that arena. Had Dadabhai the sinews of those Samsons? Was he a match for those expert gladiators? Let us survey the general situation.

By the middle of the year 1873 Baroda's administrative machinery had broken down; the Durbar had descended to the uttermost depths of degeneracy, and the Maharaja appeared to be living in a fool's paradise. His entourage managed to keep him in the dark as regards the real state of affairs; and he had neither eyes to see the symptoms nor ears to hear the rumbling of the storm that was soon to break over his head.

With the advent of Sir Philip Wodehouse as Governor of Bombay there was a change in the non-intervention policy of the Bombay Government. It was true that ever since 1802 the Gaekwar had had formal assurances that the British Government would not interfere in the internal administration of the territories of which they acknowledged him to be the ruler, but he was expected to *listen to advice in a case of gross misrule*. A new Resident, Colonel Phayre, was sent to Baroda with instructions to give such advice and to see that the reign of terror was ended. The contents of the letters he wrote might be gathered from the opening words of one of the despatches of the Bombay Government to the Government of India (August 29)

The appended letter of the Resident has brought to notice various cases which, if substantiated, will establish that gross oppression is committed, that Ministers and other officers systematically receive bribes in connection with the sale of office, and that large numbers of women are decoyed or forcibly taken from their families and converted into *Loundis*, or domestic female slaves. The history of the past is a mere record of evasion, duplicity, oppression, and corruption followed by humiliating submission intended to ward off the evil of the moment and to give time to the resumption of the old practices

In view of the extraordinary circumstances the Government of Bombay applied for the authority of the Government of India "to instruct the Resident to demand from the Gaekwar the immediate suspension of the Dewan and the Sir Subah with his deputy." The suspension of those officials was the more necessary as the Bombay Government solicited further authority to appoint a British Commission to inquire into the system of revenue administration and allegations of misgovernment and misdemeanour. The authority was granted, and a despatch sent to Mulharrao informing him of the Government of India's intention to appoint a Commission. Mulharrao begged that the orders be countermanded. "The appointment of a Commission," he urged, "will subject me to greater humiliation than interference with the details of my administration." He was,

however, told in reply that the object which the Governor-General in Council had in view was one of such importance that it was necessary that the Commission should proceed to execute the duties with which it had been entrusted.

The tone of this communication augured ill for the ruler. Petrified with terror, he was now a bundle of nerves and keenly felt the need of the strong arm of an independent and resourceful Dewan. Hence the S O S to Dadabhai. His name, it seems, had been previously commended to the Maharaja for the post. Dadabhai was informed of it by Kharshedji Nusarwanji Cama. "I have heard from reliable sources," he wrote (January 5, 1872), "that Mulharrao Gackwar has had conversations with prominent persons and has formed a high opinion of you. It is their belief that if you become his Dewan it would not only be mutually beneficial to you and the Maharaja but would also lead to friendly relations of the State with the British Government." Then, however, the Maharaja's throne had not been tottering so much as it was now. The invitation came to Dadabhai, at the eleventh hour, when the house was actually on fire. Dadabhai hesitated. He hesitated, not because he feared harm might come to him, but because he was doubtful whether it would not be over-ambitious of him to accept such an administrative office. He consulted Sir Bartle Frere and Sir Erskine Perry. Sir Bartle warned him that if he accepted the post, he would be undertaking "a terribly difficult task."

Dadabhai awaited Sir Erskine's opinion. Meanwhile news came from Bombay that a violent agitation had been launched in the Press by designing persons against his nomination as Dewan of Baroda. The choice of the Maharaja came upon the courtiers and the Residency as a bolt from the blue. It meant the end of the rabble that had surrounded the Maharaja. Antagonism from such a quarter was only to be expected, but the most disconcerting opposition came from the British Resident. He had from the outset constituted the Residency into an *imperium in imperio*. Acceptance or rejection of the Minister whom the Prince should choose to appoint would depend on his pleasure. A Dewan was

expected to take the cue from the Resident. Would a man like Dadabhai, who had breathed the free atmosphere of England, be so submissive? Was he not, besides, a "political agitator"? Colonel Phayre's indignation at the selection of Dadabhai was so pronounced that there were reports in the Press that the British Government were not likely to countenance his appointment as Minister. In its issue of October 31, 1873, the *Times of India* quoted the following extract from the *Indu Prakash*:

We have learnt that Colonel Phayre is opposed to Mr. Dadabhai's advent and that he has remonstrated with His Highness against sending for Mr. Dadabhai. Not only this, but, as we are informed, Colonel Phayre has expressed himself to His Highness that he will not allow Mr. Dadabhai to enter Baroda, and report says he has actually addressed the Bombay Government on the subject.

Commenting on this announcement, the editor of the *Times of India* observed:

This is very circumstantial, but the description of the Resident's position in the matter is so absurd that the account requires confirmation. If it be accepted, the only comment must be that the gallant political, under the strain of recent events, has lost his head.

Strong language this, but not undeserved for a political officer incapable of realizing that he had been overdoing his part. The same journal welcomed the news of Mulharrao's reported desire to seek counsel from "our now absent Bombay citizen." It was one of the few traits entitling the Gackwar to the consideration of decent people if Mulharrao was sincerely inclined to take advice from "a man so politically enlightened and so high-principled" as Dadabhai was known to be.

This was one view of the situation, emanating from an Anglo-Indian journal that had no axe to grind, a journal which did not share Dadabhai's political views but had the fairness to recognize in him a "high-principled" man, "politically enlightened." Those who held the opposite view, more vocal but less responsible, were

bent on discrediting the appointment. What practical administrative experience could Dadabhai boast of? Was it a mere whim of the Maharaja, or was it an exaggerated notion of the influence which Dadabhai was believed to wield at Whitehall that made the Prince go six thousand miles away in search of a counsellor? Other critics were more uncharitable. Was a political agitator, they asked, fit for a Dewan's *gadi*? In a letter written a few months later by Sorabjee Shapurjee Bengalee to Dadabhai (January 12, 1874), he mentioned the name of a British officer in the Indian Civil Service who, he had reason to believe, was the writer of several letters in the *Bombay Gazette*, condemning the appointment. "Probably," added Bengalee, "he has an eye for himself at Baroda."

When Dadabhai heard in England that a storm was thus already brewing in and around Baroda, he communicated the news to Sir Erskine so that he might take that factor also into consideration before giving his advice. His reply, however, put the issue on an altogether higher plane. He wrote:

I am very sorry to hear that objections have been made to your going to Baroda as Dewan. Though for your own sake I should have counselled you against accepting such an appointment, I think for the sake of good government, and for British interests as well as for the Gackwar's, he could not have made a better selection. I am writing in a great hurry to catch the post in reply to your letter. I may add that I have been talking the matter over with Sir Bartle Frere and we entirely agree in the above view of the matter.

Such a communication was sufficient to infuse in Dadabhai all the courage he needed. It made him take an optimistic view of the situation. He had himself repeatedly urged that men in British India with high educational attainments and strong moral character should be given opportunities to render themselves useful in the cause of good government. When such an opportunity was offered to him in an Indian State, could he refuse it?

Maharajas as a class are to-day known to be fickle; they were more so in Dadabhai's days. What if, one fine morning, Mul-



harrao woke up with a brilliant idea and said to his amiable Dewan: "My dear Dadabhai Sheth, during your Dewanship I have learnt a very important lesson, and that is that only birds of the same feather can flock together. In your wonderful zeal to create a new heaven and a new earth you have been soaring so high that I am lagging behind and impeding your progress. The best thing, therefore, is to let me remain on this wicked earth; I shall be able to keep pace with a Dewan like my brother-in-law, Nana Saheb, and you, old bird, you go on soaring higher and higher in your seraphic flight—here is your passage to London!"

Was Dadabhai unprepared for such a contingency? Did he not know that there had been scarcely a Dewan in Baroda who had not been ejected from his post either by the Maharaja of his own free will or at the instance of the British Government?

Dadabhai knew that this and many other considerations were deterrent factors; but the supreme consideration was that of service in the cause of good government. Here was an invitation to him to make such contribution as he could to promote that cause. The only conditions he considered necessary were the confidence and co-operation of the Maharaja. As long as he got these, he would do his best for Baroda and its people; when these were withdrawn, he would not care to stay there for a moment. The decision was thus taken, for good or ill; Dadabhai hastened to Baroda.

## CHAPTER XIII

### A CROWN OF THORNS

**B**Y the end of the year 1873 we find the Dewan-designate of Baroda buried in piles of State papers and State *dastars*. To gather up threads by diving into the by-gones of almost every question that came up, to keep abreast of current events, to remodel the machinery of administration and to lay plans for the future, was enough to keep him plunged in business from early morning till midnight; but such pressure of work was nothing compared with the trouble and worry caused by the intrigues of the wily crowd surrounding the Maharaja and the vexatious references and demands for explanation which came from the Resident. Encouraged by the mischief-makers in the Residency, people defied the authority of the officials of the State and sent petitions to the Resident, who passed on all sorts of frivolous complaints and memorials to the Dewan for inquiry. The burden seemed to be more than could be borne by even an Atlas like Dadabhai. The tide of official work rolled on in greater and greater volume, keeping him busy for two-thirds of the twenty-four hours of the day.

The careful man, who lived to be a nonagenarian, could not be charged with neglect of health. It was one of his maxims that to have a sound mind in a sound body one should have eight hours' sleep. But how could he get this and find time for his meals and the daily routine of life? Sometimes he sacrificed about an hour's sleep; sometimes he snatched an hour from work. He had his bath early in the morning; his toilet was quite a simple affair; he knew no breakfast, and even his luncheon did not take more than three to four minutes. As the author of this memoir learnt from the lips of Dadabhai's beloved lieutenant, Hormusji Ardeseer Wadya, it consisted mostly of three or four raw eggs, which he

would gulp down, standing in the dining-room, one after another, and then hasten to his desk.

Eager as he was to do his best for the State, Dadabhai looked far and wide for capable and desirable men whom he could engage as his immediate assistants. A letter from Sorabjee Shapurjee Bengalee (January 12, 1874) gives the names of the talented young men of the day whom Dadabhai would have liked to enrol in the service of the State.

I am glad to learn that you have put yourself in communication with Mandlik, Ranade, and Nana Moroji. If you have men like these about you, the administration of Baroda will, I am sure, become in one year a model for others to imitate and will prove what good a purely educated native Government is capable of accomplishing. I wish you had asked me to see each of the above gentlemen on your behalf, because then I could urge on them, on public grounds, the acceptance of your offer to each.

None of the three, it appears, was willing to throw himself into the turmoil of the most stormy Durbar of the day. Dadabhai was, however, able to secure excellent lieutenants in Bal Mangesh, who was appointed Chief Justice, Kazi Shahabuddin, who was put in charge of the Revenue Department, and Hormusji Ardeseer Wadya, who was nominated Chief Magistrate and placed in charge of the Criminal and Police Departments. Wadya officiated also as Personal Assistant to the Dewan and became Dadabhai's right-hand man.

With such earnestness Dadabhai started his work; but many months were to run before he could be formally installed on the Prime Minister's *gadi*. The Maharaja had sent a note (December 23, 1873) to the Residency, intimating that Dadabhai had taken charge of his duties. In forwarding it to the Government of Bombay the Resident expressed his opinion that in view of their experience of Dadabhai's connexion with the Baroda State since the close of the year 1872 and "his invariable line of conduct towards the British Government," they would be incurring a very grave responsibility if they formally recognized him as Dewan, "thereby virtually approving the Gaekwar's

selection of him and his party to carry out a work of reform which was beyond them."

This attitude of the Resident accounted for the delay in recognizing Dadabhai's Dewanship. Taking advantage of the delay, scheming courtiers spread the report that Government would not give their consent to the appointment; it had a very demoralizing influence on the staff. Thus disabled, what impression could Dadabhai make on the rough materials he had to deal with? How could he make a clean sweep of those disturbing elements in the body politic which had made the Gaekwar's Durbar a byword for infamy? The Maharaja himself began to vacillate, and Dadabhai felt paralysed in his efforts to do anything useful.

The treaties between the British Government and the Baroda Durbar provided that the Gaekwar was to choose his own Minister in consultation with the British Government. Ministers had, however, been appointed without previous reference to the Paramount Power, and the right of veto was never exercised. Now when a Dewan of high principles and unimpeachable integrity had been selected, the Government of Bombay seemed unwilling to recognize the appointment.

Colonel Phayre failed to understand how a man of high principles could consent to serve a master of Mulharrao's character. He could only set it down to love of power and position. Whilst assuming the reins of office, Dadabhai had told the Maharaja: "I am not accepting your service for gain or glory. My ambition is to bring about, with your kind co-operation, reform in the administration of your State. As long as I have your confidence and feel I am useful, all my energy will be at Your Highness's disposal. But the moment I find that the mutual goodwill is lost, or that my usefulness has ceased, I shall go."

The story of Dadabhai's relations with the Resident, and of the tragic end of Colonel Phayre's official career, might have been written differently had the impulsive Resident been present at this conversation or at another, a few weeks later, between Dadabhai and Wadya. According to the usual custom of the

Durbar, Wadya had to make his *nazar*, or present, to the Maharaja, before he could formally take charge of his office. Seeing Mulharrao for the first time, he was moved by the same thought that had prejudiced Dadabhai in the estimation of the Resident. What a contrast between the monarch and the minister as regards their physical appearance and mental and moral equipment! In appearance the Prince was the reverse of princely, undersized, of uninviting presence and coarse complexion, with eyes looking different ways and lips kept asunder by projecting black teeth—uneducated and unrefined. And Dadabhai? Did he not stand to Mulharrao as Hyperion to a Satyr?

Dadabhai was not slow to perceive what was passing in Wadya's mind. After the ceremony was over, he whispered to Wadya: "I could gather from the changes on your face that you did not like the look of the Maharaja."

"What a man to serve!" said the young barrister, afraid of offending his chief, but mustering all the courage he could command to unburden his mind.

"But Homi," said Dadabhai, with his hand on the youth's shoulder, "we have not come to serve the man, we have come to serve the cause."

Prejudiced from the very start, the Resident remained hostile till the last when he was recalled ten months later. Hostile also were the myrmidons of Mulharrao and the men of the previous regime who had been driven out of power and had sought shelter in the Residency, fearing vengeance at the hands of the Maharaja.

Thus Dadabhai's Dewanship marked the beginning of a deadly feud with inimical forces on all sides. The incendiaries in the Resident's camp were secretly fomenting discontent among the subjects, and they found willing allies in the satellites of the Durbar who were in danger of being deprived of their privileged positions by the change in the Ministry. As the Dewan's appointment had not yet been recognized, this Durbar clique thought there was a chance of torpedoing him. The easiest way of achieving that object was to pour poison into the ears of the Maharaja

and to retain their hold on him by pandering to his worst desires. Falling a prey to their machinations, the fatuous ruler began to doubt whether he had made the right selection and allowed himself to be dragged deeper and deeper into the mire.

It was a terrible trial of strength for Dadabhai. In the midst of his arduous work he had to guard himself against the subtle forces that were continuously at work to undermine his position. Meanwhile, the Commission of Inquiry was sitting in Bombay, recording evidence. After full consideration of the circumstances that had come to notice, the Commission submitted its eagerly awaited report. It was of opinion that the proceedings of Mulharrao had been "highly arbitrary and in some instances very unjust and of a character calculated to bring grave discredit on His Highness's administration and to excite distrust and alarm amongst a large portion of the influential and respectable classes of the community." The cases comprised instances of ill-treatment of the late Gackwar's relatives, arbitrary reduction of Sirdars and Silledars, confiscation of estates, and seizures of women to render forced service in the palace.

We deem it essential (observed the members of the Commission) that the Minister of the Baroda State shall be selected with reference to his administrative experience and personal and other special qualifications for the post, that he shall have such support from the Resident as may be necessary to enable him to carry out efficiently and satisfactorily the important functions of his office, and that he shall not be liable to removal without the special orders of the British Government. We are further of opinion that the Resident should for a time at least be vested with special authority to intervene, if necessary, between the Maharaja and the Minister.

Concurring in the conclusions of the Commission, the Bombay Government informed the Government of India that the Gackwar had selected as his Dewan Dadabhai Naoroji who stood high in the estimation of many persons, both in India and in England, and would, no doubt, make every effort in his power to introduce a

better system of government, but that it would be difficult to imagine a worse arrangement than that proposed to be made, in deference to the wishes of the Maharaja, namely, that the previous Dewan, His Highness's brother-in-law, should remain about the person of the Gackwar under the title of *Pratinidhi*, and that the new holders of the four chief departments of government should have associated with them the ministers who were previously in charge. "The Gackwar and his agents," they added, "would be enabled to shelter themselves behind Mr. Dadabhai's reputation, and he would be powerless for any reform of abuses." The Government of Bombay, therefore, hoped that His Excellency the Viceroy in Council would authorize them to recommend a fit person to the Gackwar for nomination by him as Minister.

At the urgent solicitation of the Maharaja, a copy of the Commission's report was sent to him, early in April, when he was at Navsari, his summer resort. A reply was drawn up by Dadabhai, with the approval of Mulharrao, stating that as the Viceroy intended to offer his "friendly advice" to the Gackwar, he would await it before submitting his views. The fair copy, signed and sealed, was taken the next morning by Nana Sahib, Mulharrao's favourite, to Colonel Phayre. On reading the copy, which was for his information, the Colonel flung the papers away. "This is no reply," said he. "It is only a trick of Dadabhai to secure his position, and to leave the old Durbaris out in the cold. A full reply should at once be given to the report."

The reply was taken back. The Durbaris urged that a full and immediate defence, as advised by the Resident, should be sent. Dadabhai and Wadya, with their decided "No," were in a hopeless minority. They had both passed sleepless nights, poring over the records and endeavouring to unearth every bit of evidence that could be adduced in favour of the Maharaja. They could not, however, discover anything that could be honestly or usefully urged in defence. Even so, a counsel like Wadya would have loved to hold the Maharaja's brief, but, said Dadabhai, "We are not here, Homi, to defend the Maharaja's past; we have

to look to the present and the future." Mulharrao, however, believed that the future depended on the justification of the past.

"Maharaj," said Dadabhai, "although the report is open to attack in some places, it would be suicidal on your part to make an attempt to justify all that has been done."

It was one of his lucid intervals; the Maharaja agreed that they should take time to consider the matter. Another modified reply was prepared to meet his wishes, stating that the Maharaja reserved discussion of the Commission's findings concerning the allegations from which he should naturally desire to clear himself and his ex-Dewan at an early opportunity. When, however, it was copied fair on the usual gold paper and the Maharaja was about to put his signature to it, the meddlesome Durbaris implored him to hold his hand. He instantly turned round and coaxed Dadabhai again to fall in with his wishes to prepare a defence. Dadabhai reiterated his opinion, but the "defence" party carried the day. A reply was sent to the Viceroy, stating that the Maharaja was preparing a rejoinder to the Report. The Colonel afterwards based on this letter his insinuation that the ruler had been incited by Dadabhai to defend himself. Long afterwards, when Dadabhai saw this attack on him in one of the letters embodied in the Blue Books, he characterized it as an illustration of the Gujarati saying, *chor kotwal ne dande* (the thief fines the magistrate).

Mulharrao hoped the Dewan would now prepare a defence, but he was soon disillusioned. Dadabhai stood to his guns.

"Then what reply do you wish to send?" asked Mulharrao.

"My reply would be," said Dadabhai, "that we do not think any useful purpose would be served by raking up the past, but that you desire to put things straight within a year or two with the help of your Dewan. I would add that you are also prepared to give a guarantee for good government for the future and that you hope that you would be given a chance to make good your promise."

"That would mean I accept the verdict of the Commission."

"Not necessarily," said Dadabhai. "I would even go so far



as to admit certain things. Yet I do not ask Your Highness to admit anything. If you follow the course suggested by me, you neither accept nor challenge the conclusions of the Commission. You merely consider it futile to discuss the matter, and, without admitting anything, show your willingness to take steps to ensure good government for the future."

The Maharaja was still adamant; and Dadabhai, too, was unmoved and immovable. He reminded the Prince of the significance of his surname, *Dordi*, as already mentioned in Chapter I.<sup>1</sup>

The Maharaja turned away in a huff; for days together no reply emanated from the Durbar. The long delay gave further opportunities to the Resident to incite the Maharaja to deal firmly with the Dewan, who was bound to respect the wishes of his master. Mulharrao became more importunate than ever. "So long as I am Dewan," said Dadabhai, "no such communication as the Maharaja wishes to issue will emanate from my office. The only alternative for me is to tender my resignation. If it suits Your Highness, I am prepared to go, just as readily as I came in obedience to your call."

The perplexed Prince was, however, not prepared for such an ultimatum. They parted once more without reaching any understanding. Such disputes told on the health of Dadabhai. He was confined to bed with fever. A factor that positively retarded his recovery was his anxiety as to the fate of the wayward Prince, the protection of whose interests had devolved on him. Would Government give Mulharrao a single chance to put his house in order? That was his concern day and night. Reports about his worries and illness reached Dadabhai's friends in Bombay. Kharshedji Nasarwanji Cama thereupon wrote: "There is a report going round that your health has broken down owing to overwork. You are sensible and need no advice, but I consider it necessary to ask you, pray pay heed to my warning and take care of your health."

<sup>1</sup> Vide p. 25, ante.

It was twelve o'clock noon. The Maharaja's state coach stopped at Dadabhai's house. That was the hour when the Gaekwar used to drive daily in the sun, after his meal. Wadya hurried out to the Prince.

"Where is Dadabhai?" he asked.

"He is just coming, Your Highness; he has gone to fetch his turban."

"I want him to drive with me," said Mulharrao. "You should also come."

After they had proceeded a few yards, Mulharrao said to Dadabhai: "I have pondered carefully over your advice; I wish to send a reply to Government as you suggest. Write it out immediately and keep it ready for issue as soon as we go to Baroda. We must take care to see that the reply is despatched before those other fellows come to know of it."

Dadabhai was delighted, this was another of those lucid intervals when Mulharrao's conversation and demeanour left nothing to be desired.

A reply was drawn up accordingly. The old gang of Durbaris and Sardars were packed off to Baroda so that they might not have scent of it. The Maharaja with Dadabhai and Wadya followed two days later. A Durbar was held as usual; after the business was gone through, the Maharaja asked Dadabhai in a whisper: "Are the papers ready?"

Wadya produced them; Mulharrao hurriedly put his signature to the document and, with trembling hands, gave it to his attendant to take it immediately to the Residency. After that, like a deer pursued by hunters, he hastened away to his private apartments and shut himself up.

The reply flung the Resident in a rage; after all, Dadabhai had had his way. Besides this, other incidents almost daily accentuated the ill-feeling he bore to the Dewan.

Infatuated with a married woman, named Lakshmibai, the Maharaja took her to his Zenana. When he was at Navsari, all of a sudden he decided to marry her, and went through the usual ceremony. A Durbar was held in honour of the event. Colonel

Phayre did not accept the invitation to attend the wedding and sent a reply to the effect that he would not recognize the marriage. He was apparently acting under instructions from the Government of Bombay, but his message created a stir in the Durbar. On behalf of the Maharaja a protest was sent to the Government.

More fuel was added to the fire by another incident concerning an estrangement between a couple related to the Gackwar family. The lady, whose royal pride was wounded by the conduct of her husband, an influential Sirdar, left his house and went to reside in a palace named Motibag. The Sirdar threatened to remove her by force to his own home. A patrol of Arabs guarded the palace, but it was rumoured that the Sirdar, with the support of the Resident, would accept the challenge and storm it. There was every likelihood of bloodshed in Motibag—a very embarrassing situation for the Dewan. He deputed Wadya to prevail upon the young lady to take up a conciliatory attitude, but his mission was unsuccessful. Made of much sterner stuff than Dadabhai imagined, she told Wadya, "I belong to the Gackwar family; and I will not tolerate an insult, even though the offender be my husband." An attack on Motibag was imminent which, it was feared, would lead to a disastrous explosion. People began to say that it was going to be a trial of strength between the Resident and the Dewan. Dadabhai went straight to Colonel Phayre and asked whether it was true that he had helped the Sirdar with his men.

"Yes!" the Colonel blurted out.

"Do one thing, please," said Dadabhai; "ask them to wait for a day. I hope to bring about a settlement tomorrow."

The Resident could not refuse such a request. Dadabhai then went to Mulharrao to ask him to urge the Princess to go back to her husband under threat of forfeiture of the allowance she was getting from the State. He was asleep. On his own authority Dadabhai used the Maharaja's seal. It was an apt observation of Cobden, "you may reason ever so logically, but never so convincingly as through the pocket." The device of playing off the young lady's acquisitiveness against her combativeness succeeded remarkably well. The Princess suddenly cooled down

and walked back into her husband's parlour. When, however, Mulharrao came to know of it, he did not disguise his displeasure that the Dewan should have used his seal without his knowledge.

"Maharaj," said Wadya, who was standing near him at the time, "if Dadabhai had waited for your consent, there might have been a catastrophe which would perhaps have made your throne totter!"

Dispute heaped on dispute, complaint on complaint, intrigue on intrigue, marked the order of the day during the first seven months of Dadabhai's premiership. As yet his appointment as Dewan was not recognized. The Maharaja's own fate was hanging in the balance, no reply had been received to his last communication concerning his promise to turn over a new leaf. These uncertainties strengthened the hands of antagonists whose attacks were daily becoming more and more venomous. Versed in all the arts of political chicanery, they contrived to make the Dewan's position as uncomfortable as possible, and to hamper progress in every direction. His mind was full of plans for a root and branch reform in the system of government and for the reorganization of the machinery of administration. But there was going on within the State an incessant conflict between the forces of the Good Spirit and those of the Evil Spirit. Until that war was brought to a satisfactory conclusion, the Minister must be prepared to be thwarted in all his efforts to set the ruler on his legs again. Nevertheless, there was no slackening of effort on the part of the Dewan and his associates to proceed with the projects decided upon for reforming the administration.

Slowly but steadily the new regime was manifesting its advantages. The reorganization of the different departments was actively pursued, new systems and improved methods of work were introduced. The head of the revenue department toured provinces and cheered the afflicted peasantry by his personal assurance of projected measures to relieve them of the heavy burden of assessment. The pernicious system of selling justice to the highest bidder, the greatest scandal of Baroda, was

stopped, but not without a tussle with the ruling Chief. He had come to regard *nazarana* as a source of his own income, just as legitimate as any other method of raising revenue. Dadabhai had never cavilled with the Maharaja on trifles, but on points of principle he always held his own. In regard to those scandalous exactions he refused to listen to any compromise—he was determined that no *nazarana* should sully the fair name of justice during his ministership in the State of Baroda. The Maharaja had to yield. Instead of the hole-and-corner arrangements between the judges and the pleaders for the amount of *nazarana* to be paid to the Gaekwar and the bribes for judges and Durbaris, there was now a proper investigation of each case in open court, and decisions were based on merit. The police force was also purged of abuses, people were astonished to see police officers themselves accused of corruption tried in Wadya's court, compelled to give an account of their stewardship, and made to feel the weight of the law in case of guilt. By order of the Dewan and under his guidance the Penal Code and the Civil and Criminal Procedure Codes were under preparation by Bal Mangesh and Wadya, and the revenue system was being recast by Kazi Shahbuddin.

The Augcan stables were thus being cleansed with the purifying waters of the spring, which, Ganga-like, flowed from the fountain-head of the Ministry. Above all, the new regime marked the institution of a responsible, open-handed, and quickening administration in lieu of the old form of government, corrupt to the core, unaccountable and extortionate. It afforded to the people an ocular demonstration of the difference between earnestness and sham, between efficiency and deadening routine, between honesty and corruption. For the oppressed populace it was a godsend, and among all classes of people it inspired feelings of confidence and hope.

Faith in the righteousness of his cause sustained Dadabhai in his strenuous efforts to hold aloft the standard of reform in all branches of administration. All his colleagues toiled with him from early morning till late in the evening, giving a worthless Prince the best they had in them. After all, the greatest enemy of

Mulharrao was Mulharrao himself; the greatest obstacle in the path of the righteous Dewan was the perverse Maharaja. Surrounded by men who were born enemies of truth and righteousness, men who hated progress, men whose happiness depended on the misery and oppression of the multitude, he continued to listen to those worthless Durbaris who filled his mind with rubbish about his treaty rights, and instilled into his ears poisonous words calculated to antagonize him to the Minister. Dadabhai often exposed to his royal master the villainy of that crafty crowd, but he failed to break the magic spell which they had woven around him.

Those adepts at systematic plunder were bent upon reviving the system of deciding judicial cases by *nazarana*. There were large outstanding amounts due to the Maharaja in the matter of various law suits disposed of under the old system. Bal Mangesh asked the Dewan whether the amount should be recovered. "Not a pie," said Dadabhai. The sharp-beaked birds of prey made this a bone of contention between the ruler and the Dewan. Those *nazars* had been promised to the Maharaja; the Minister, they maintained, had no right to deprive him of his dues. Agreeing with them, he told Dadabhai that the system must be revived and the outstanding amount collected. After a good deal of argument, Dadabhai informed him, early in July, that if he was bent on reviving the pernicious system and relapsing into other old practices, he might please himself, Dadabhai would resign.

This message was communicated to Mulharrao verbally through Wadya and also in writing. There were lively discussions with the Maharaja. At one of the interviews, Wadya, who was alone with the Prince, said: "Maharaj, you will agree that our advice to you is disinterested and solely for your good. Dadabhai has not come to stay here for good, nor have we. The stakes are yours; the fortune of none of us, not even of your courtiers, is so inseparably linked with the destiny of the State as is yours. It is, therefore, our duty to guard your interests above everything else—and that is what Dadabhai is doing."

Mulharrao conceded all that, but he insisted that the officers

of the State should in that particular case watch their master's interests, as he desired. When Dadabhai heard this, he asked Wadya to tell the Maharaja that he had been simply wasting time and that he was much mistaken if he thought the officers would allow him and his favourites to go back to their old ways.

The Maharaja now realized that he was drifting to the brink of a precipice. The Minister's resignation might mean British intervention and annexation. An experienced journalist, J. H. Stocqueler, had shrewdly advised Dadabhai, when he assumed the reins of Dewanship, that he should have the word "Annexation" inscribed in every room in the palace and the word dinned into the Maharaja's ears whenever he evinced a disposition to perpetrate some absurdity. That warning now recurred to the mind, fully justified. Mulharrao cleverly retraced his steps, assuring Wadya that he had never for a moment doubted the sincerity of his Dewan. "I am not going to part," he solemnly declared, "from so good a Minister." Dadabhai sent word that he would change his mind only if he were allowed a free hand. "Please ask Dadabhai," said the Maharaja to Wadya, "to prepare a statement of what he wants." At the same time he impressed on Wadya that he had his rights, too, and that the last word should rest with him.

Dadabhai at once wrote a letter, in Gujarati (July 31), setting forth the terms and conditions on which he was prepared to continue in office. It gives an idea of the disabilities under which he had to labour and serves, incidentally, as an effective answer to his revilers, who questioned his motives in accepting office.

If Sircar determines to persist in the same views which he expressed to Ajam Hormusji, I cannot carry on the administration. Had I known such views at the commencement, I would not have undertaken the work, and if Sircar's present views remain the same, I have then no hope that my views would be accepted. But as Sircar has desired to let him know my views, I cannot but accede. My simple object is the welfare of the Sircar and the State, otherwise I have no business here. The chief foundation of the State must be laid upon justice and fairness. Sircar, giving me his

confidence, should assist in my work with a sincere heart. Bearing this object in mind I state below what I ask

1. Written orders should be sent to all departments. Only orders written in the name of the Sircar and countersigned by the Dewan are to be obeyed. No other orders should be obeyed.

2. All orders for payment on the State Banks must be *initialed* by me.

3. A certain amount should be fixed for Sircar's private expenditure, including that of his private friends and attendants.

4. It is necessary to engage the services of additional fit men and to increase the salaries of fit men already in the service and to make several reforms and alterations. For this purpose I should have permission to spend five lakhs per annum for three years, beyond the present expenditure.

8. No *Nazarana* whatever should be taken in matters of justice, or of appointment or dismissal of officials.

9. Several high officials ought to be made to resign their Durbari posts.

10. Should Sircar have to make any appointment in State Service, I should be consulted.

I now most earnestly request that if Sircar would consent to carry on the administration according to the foregoing clauses, it is most essentially necessary for the Sircar to make a thorough determination not to disturb it afterwards. It is my duty to preserve intact the rights and increase the fame of Sircar, and I shall not fail to do all I can in that way.

The Maharaja wanted time to study what he regarded as an ultimatum and what his Durbaris construed as an attempt to "swallow up the *Riyasat* (State)." There were several friendly discussions between him and Dadabhai, but while the arrangement was still under discussion, on August 3, came a despatch from the Viceroy, which put all other matters in the background.

Without knowing its contents, the Maharaja took it to be the reply to his representation on which hung his future. He called one of his trusted Durbaris and asked him to explain the contents



to him. "Thank God," said the man, "it grants what you asked for." Overruling the Government of Bombay, the Calcutta authorities preferred to hold the Gaekwar himself responsible for the good government of his State under a warning that if he did not reform his administration by the end of December 1875, he would be deposed from power. The choice of Minister was left to His Highness.

At ten o'clock in the night, when it was pouring heavily, attendants of the Court came with a state coach, saying Sircar wanted the Dewan Saheb. In torrents of rain Dadabhai and Wadya went to the palace. They had heard beforehand that the reply had been received and read out to His Highness. The Maharaja handed the Viceroy's reply to the Minister. Whilst he was reading it, Wadya and others tried to discover its contents from the emotions reflected on Dadabhai's face, but they could gather nothing from the placid look of the man whom one never saw ruffled throughout his life.

Having read the letter, Dadabhai returned it to the Prince, saying, "All right, Maharaj."

"What does it say?" asked Mulharrao, naïvely.

"You know it very well," replied Dadabhai rather curtly. "You have had it translated to you." After having administered the gentle rebuke, he repeated the contents of the epistle and said, "that's all right."

There was rejoicing in the Maharaja's palace, but wailing in the Residency. Foiled in his calculations, Colonel Phayre remained as intractable as ever. "After all," said some of the Durbaris to him, "the Maharaja has got a lease of power for seventeen months and will have his own way in the appointment of his Prime Minister." The Colonel thereupon swore, "*Girainga! Girainga!* (I will bring him down, I will bring him down). You will see I will bring down the Dewan's administration within two or three months by raising all Baroda territory up against it." Dadabhai was informed of this threat. He simply smiled and took no notice of it.

It was, however, a portent of the assaults which were to follow

and to culminate in a war to the knife. The Durbaris at once made a dead set against Dadabhai. He was still the Dewan-designate; they could still unseat him before it was decided formally to hand him the seals of office. They told the Maharaja, "Everything in future will depend on the Resident's reports about the administration of the State; he was kindly disposed; what could Dadabhai do? See how he was trying to dictate his terms to Your Highness to make over the *riyasat* to himself and his party and to reduce the ruler, who has sovereign rights, to the position of a puppet!"

Within a week their intrigues assumed alarming proportions; the Maharaja's own attitude towards the Minister was anything but friendly. The Viceroy's letter had put the Durbar on its trial; important decisions had to be taken; the Maharaja had to be cut off from the nefarious cabal, but he was still playing into their hands. He thought he was safe for seventeen months at least; why should he allow the Dewan to clip his wings? Could not the Viceroy be satisfied or hoodwinked by other means and devices?

Seeing how the wind was veering, Dadabhai and his colleagues tendered their resignations on August 9, so as to leave the Gaekwar free to act as he liked. But Mulharrao had not yet made up his mind as to whether it would be safe to let Dadabhai go. Personally he seemed to fear the consequences. To quote Dadabhai's words, he brought "such a pressure of entreaty" on him and his colleagues that they felt compelled to withdraw their resignations.

Thwarted once more in his designs, the Resident was indignant. Two of the mischief-makers, Bapubhai and Govindrao Mama, took a message from the Colonel to the Gaekwar, on August 11, that His Highness should on no account continue to retain Dadabhai as Dewan, that he should turn all the members of Dadabhai's Cabinet out, that Manibhai, his own assistant, and two others were a thousand times better than Dadabhai and that Dadabhai's appointment would mean war and not peace, which would bring about the ruin of the Gaekwar within three months. In the evening came the news that one of those intermediaries, Bapubhai, would be one of the new Cabinet that was to

be set up, if Dadabhai was dismissed. This keen-witted Durbari, who professed to be very friendly to Dadabhai, was one of the aspirants for ministership.

"Maharaj," said Dadabhai solemnly to Mulharrao, "the Colonel is dead against us. We believe that if you are sincere and loyal to your pledges for reform, no harm will come to you from the British Government, certainly not from the present Viceroy who has been so considerate and just. In spite of this belief of ours, we desire that you should take time to think carefully before you decide that I should continue in the Dewanship."

On this occasion, however, the Gaekwar seemed to have resolutely made up his mind. He was not afraid of the Resident's threats; he wanted Dadabhai to remain. Forthwith he issued a note that military honours be accorded to Dadabhai as Dewan. "Azam Dadabhai Naoroji," ran the letter of appointment, "has my full confidence and is a worthy man."

On September 23, 1874, the Dewan was invested with the insignia of office with all due ceremonies and amidst the rejoicing of the general public. Even the Resident showed a disposition to reconcile himself to the settled fact and expressed his willingness to support Dadabhai in his efforts to introduce reforms. What could have brought about this miraculous change? There is a history behind it.

Whilst allowing time to the Maharaja to attend to matters in which the administration of the State called for reform, the Government of India had expressly issued instructions that the Resident should give the Minister, whoever he might be, "the fullest support in carrying out the reforms." Conveying these instructions to the Resident, the Government of Bombay considered it necessary to offer a gentle hint to him not to interfere any more in the selection of the Dewan. "You will doubtless perceive," they said, "that by the orders of the Government of India the choice of the Minister is left entirely with His Highness."

Despite this warning, no stone was left unturned to get rid of Dadabhai. The Resident excelled in burrowing like a mole, and

he utilized with great dexterity various underground sources of information to discredit Dadabhai. Despatch after despatch was sent to Government, impeaching him for countless sins, based on gossip, falsehoods, and half truths, emanating from the fertile imagination of the Durbaris. The memorandum of the terms on which Dadabhai agreed to continue in office was described as an agreement "to make over the Raj" to Dadabhai and his party; and the Resident, whose duty it was to watch the interests of the Paramount Power, added: "I looked upon the very proposal on Mr. Dadabhai's part as an offence against the sovereignty of the British power, of which, had it been placed before me, I would have taken the most serious notice." In the same letter he stated that His Highness had for a long time wanted to part with Dadabhai, but that he feared his "Home" influence; that the Maharaja had consulted him in the matter of the retention in office of Dadabhai and his party; and that he had given it as his "unalterable conviction" that they had not "the knowledge, ability, experience, or weight of character sufficient to carry out the reforms needed." He had further proposed that his assistant Manibhai be appointed joint *karbhari* (manager) with Bapubhai who, he represented, was actually doing the work of Dewan. These two could, in his opinion, look after the administration, if Dadabhai and his party carried out their threat of resignation.

Another letter, written two days later, conveyed the news that the Maharaja did not wish to retain Dadabhai and that he would dismiss him, if the British Government advised him to that effect. The very next day, however, the Maharaja issued his communiqué, expressing full confidence in Dadabhai. Thereupon another letter was sent the same day, full of calumny and fictitious complaints, and in a further communication, sent the following day, the distracted man went so far as to suggest that no formal recognition of Dadabhai as Dewan should be made by the Bombay Government and that the usual military honours due to the Dewan of the Baroda State, for which the Durbar had written to the Resident, should be withheld.

The Government of Bombay now thought it necessary to put

an end to such political palaver. They wrote to the Resident that they had read his last letter with great surprise. The expression of his "determined opposition" to Dadabhai was inconsistent with the order that the Gaekwar should be left free to appoint his own Dewan.

In order that the false step you have taken may be retraced (they observed), you will inform the Gaekwar in writing that His Excellency in Council desires to acknowledge the promptness with which His Highness has attended to the advice of the Government of India in the matter of removing certain officials from office and that the Government, without pronouncing any opinion about the qualifications of Mr Dadabhai, desire to offer no objection whatever to his appointment as Dewan and you should add that you will afford him every assistance he may need and accord to him the usual military honours

The incensed officer would not take this censure lying down. A defence of his attitude and action followed, which merely aggravated the previous offence. The Government in reply said, "The explanation now offered cannot be pronounced satisfactory" and added that further discussion on those points should be stopped.

This episode explains the chastened mood of the Colonel about the time the reins of office were formally placed in Dadabhai's hands. The question now was: Invested with all the authority of office, and armed with full powers, would the Minister be able to redeem Baroda? From the Government letter it would appear that a clean sweep of the turbulent elements in the Durbar had been made. That was not so, the Maharaja would not part with his brother-in-law, Khanwalkar, the late Dewan, who was retained as his *Pratinidhi*, or representative, nor could his favourite *Karbhari*, Damodar, be set aside. Damodar had lately come into the good graces of the Resident, who, in an earlier communication, had described him as "the notorious Damoderpant, the present favourite of the Gaekwar,

the panderer to his grossest vices, the oppressor of women." There was serious danger that such men would form a centre for the machinations of the old clique of Durbaris whom it was necessary to cut off completely from access to the Prince. Experience of the storms encountered in the past forbade hope of smooth sailing, but Dadabhai was an optimist.

## CHAPTER XIV

# MINISTER RESIGNS—MAHARAJA DEPOSED

THE formal installation of Dadabhai as Minister was signalized by a remission of one-fourth of the land assessment, a timely concession to the poverty of the peasantry, and by proclamations of far-reaching importance for the welfare of the public generally. One of these made the giving of *nazarana* by any subject, and the receiving of it by any officer, penal, another abolished the system of *veth*, or forced labour, another rendered the infliction of torture illegal. The Dewan began to hear and decide complaints against the Government concerning confiscation of property. He was prepared to come to a settlement also in regard to the cases of the disgruntled Sirdars who had not been paid their dues. With the hearing of these cases, however, commenced fresh troubles. The Sirdars assumed a menacing attitude, evidently under the instigation of wire-pullers. They insulted the Maharaja by irregular attendance at the *Kachery*, assembled in streets in large numbers, and lodged appeals against the State before the Resident.

Instead of helping Dadabhai to settle their cases, the Resident acted as a prosecutor and harassed the Dewan with incessant and irritating interference. Evidently the effect of the dose administered by the Bombay Government had soon worn off. The Residency had once more become a focus of resistance and obstruction. It was time, thought Dadabhai, that the Maharaja should demand that the Resident be recalled. The Maharaja agreed. A despatch was drawn up by Dadabhai. In glaring contrast to the abusive and malicious representations made by the Colonel, what a plain, dignified, and magnanimous document

was Dadabhai's despatch, reminding us of one "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again!"

I beg it to be understood that I do not impute other than conscientious motives to Colonel Phayre. But he is too committed to a distinct line. He makes no allowances. He forgets that till the officials I have asked for come, I could not make much progress in the Mahals, and he continues to lend a ready ear to complaints against me, thus defeating the very object which he says he has in view of helping me in the arduous task before me. Colonel Phayre has been my prosecutor with a determined and strong will and purpose, and that he should now sit in judgment upon me, is, I must submit, simply unfair to me. From only three months' experience it is clear that he has prejudiced the case and I cannot expect an impartial report from him. I owe it to myself and to those whom I have engaged for work to submit how hopeless any efforts on my part would be if Colonel Phayre were to continue here as representative of the Paramount Power with his uncompromising bias against me and my officials.

Such was the straightforward impeachment for offences which might have called for much stronger language. The enraged Resident forwarded it with a reply from him, characterizing all that was written as "false accusations" and "disingenuous suppression of truth." But how unfounded his protests and his own allegations were was brought home to him by the verdict of the Government of India. The correspondence satisfied them that Colonel Phayre had "thoroughly misunderstood" the spirit of the instructions both of the Government of India and the Government of Bombay and that the duties of Resident at Baroda could no longer be entrusted to him, with the reasonable prospect of a satisfactory result. The Government of Bombay also came in for blame for not having realized in time "the gravity of the situation."

As a temporary measure, Sir Lewis Pelly was deputed as Agent to the Governor-General and Special Commissioner at Baroda; the Bombay Government's political jurisdiction over Baroda was suspended. In a long and dignified protest they stressed the



political significance of the removal of a Resident at the request of an Indian Prince and added that they would themselves have transferred the Residency to other hands, "if any other appointment of equal worth had been at their disposal for his employment."

The curtain now rises over the India Office. There we see Lord Salisbury poring over a pile of papers, his face changing colour with surprise, irritation, and indignation. He expresses his regret that in a matter so grave the Governor and Council of Bombay, with their zeal for the prerogatives of the Presidency of Bombay, should have allowed their minds to be swayed by "motives of a secondary character." He also finds that Colonel Phayre's character was little fitted for the delicate duties with which he had been charged and that his departure from the orders he had received was too serious to be overlooked. He is, however, relieved to find that the Government of India took, even at the eleventh hour, the necessary action.

It was a great triumph for Mulharrao that at his bidding an obstructive and aggressive Resident had been removed. A correspondent informed the *Times of India* that the Maharaja feasted three thousand Brahmuns and lavishly distributed sweets to celebrate the great deliverance. To Dadabhai, too, it was a relief; but he received the news calmly, rather pensively. It is no pleasure to be the cause of the downfall of another; in public life one's duty renders it necessary at times to resort to desperate remedies for the cure of desperate diseases, but that consideration cannot assuage the pain and pathos of it.

There were other reasons, too, why Dadabhai could not share the joy of the Maharaja or the jubilation of the public in what was really his victory. Many things had happened since the removal of the Resident had been demanded. The Durbarishad not the slightest doubt that the demand would be turned down by Government as preposterous; no political agent had ever been thus withdrawn. They had, therefore, set the stage for a general rising. The State revenue was falling off; with the remission allowed, it would show a large deficit; payment of arrears was resisted under

the instigation of the gang working in collaboration with the Residency people. There was no money in the Treasury to pay the ordinary charges of administration, yet the Maharaja insisted on all the old dismissed courtiers being paid their emoluments. Large amounts had to be paid as the result of the investigation of complaints and petitions concerning the past administration, the Maharaja would not listen to his privy purse being tapped.

To add to these worries, a serious allegation was laid at the door of the Maharaja. Every morning, after a walk or a ride, Colonel Phayre was in the habit of drinking a glass of *sherbet* made of *pummelou* juice. He would then go to his office adjoining the main building of the Residency. On the morning of November 9, the Colonel threw away the morning draught after one or two sips, as he did not like the taste. Within a short time he experienced nausea, a dizzy feeling in the head and other queer symptoms. He suspected mischief, on examining the goblet of *sherbet* he noticed a sort of sediment in the small quantity still left in it. The Residency surgeon found that the sediment consisted partly of arsenic and partly of some glittering substance like diamond dust. Suspicion pointed its finger at the Maharaja. The Colonel, however, said nothing about it to him or to his Dewan, but quietly reported the matter to Government. Dadabhai accepted the word of Mulharrao that he had no hand in the matter. As his Dewan, it was his duty to be most careful and vigilant that no harm should come to the Maharaja. One more item was thus added to the already abnormally inflated list of the Dewan's worries.

With the arrival of Sir Lewis Pelly, life in Baroda wore a different aspect. So far as the Maharaja was concerned, it was the case of love at first sight. From the moment the Agent to the Governor-General set foot on the soil of Baroda, he won the heart of the ruler. To what extent relief from the threats of Colonel Phayre contributed towards such attachment, it is difficult to say. But Sir Lewis possessed qualities which would have won the affection of anyone. As for the Dewan, for the first time during

the tenure of his office he experienced genuine courtesy from the representative of the British Government. It made him forget the past.

Durbars were held at repeated intervals to arrive at an understanding about the procedure to be adopted for the settlement of numerous important questions awaiting adjustment. At the very first Durbar, Sir Lewis told all petitioners to go first to the Dewan for redress; only in the case of an appeal from Sircar's decision they should write to him. He warned them also that he would have no sympathy whatsoever with the people who made administration difficult by false or exaggerated complaints; the Maharaja had as much right as his subjects to be protected from vexatious claims.

These words had the desired effect. Complainants who used to leave the office of the Dewan or of his colleagues, holding out the threat that they would appeal to the Residency, realized that it would not in future pay them to play that game. The administrative machinery began to run smoothly, all the pending cases were taken up one by one and equitable settlements reached. But funds were needed to pay all the just claims. Dadabhai suggested payment from the Maharaja's privy purse, it was but fair, he held, that a portion of the public funds wrongly appropriated towards private ends by the Maharaja should revert to the public. The Maharaja insisted, on the advice of his followers, that the amount required should be raised by a loan or taxation.

Mulharrao now began to make Dadabhai feel that he was not indispensable. It was a different thing when the enemy was at the gate, there was then need for the strong arm of a Dewan like Dadabhai to fight him.

Manners with fortunes, humours turn with climes;  
Tenets with books and principles with times

Dadabhai knew it; there was nothing left to hold together the two men, who stood poles apart in their outlook on life. During the time Dadabhai was in Baroda, there was nothing like friendship between them; no cordiality, no social intercourse. The

Dewan was a stern martinet to the Maharaja; a sort of formality marked their relations. The Minister was not the man to mince matters; by nature he was incapable of feigning friendship, when he could not feel drawn to a man; how, indeed, could one who was the soul of truth be drawn to another who was its very antithesis? Therefore, when the need for protection had disappeared, what else was there to make the Maharaja covet the services of his Dewan? He knew Dadabhai was able, straightforward, honest, resourceful—all very well for the people—but did not his very virtues militate against what the Maharaja believed were his own rights and his own interests? The old Durbaris, who still surrounded him, were at it again. "Now the Dewan Saheb is supreme," one would say within the hearing of the Maharaja; "Nay, he is the Gackwar," another would interpose; and the Prince would smile mysteriously, as if to say, "Wait and you will see how I get rid of the man!"

A terrible ordeal it was to work with such a ruler who was absolutely out of tune with his Minister's ideals, but Dadabhai was blest with the patience of Job. He still harboured hopes of handling Mulharrao tactfully and firmly, if only the weak-minded monarch could be cut off from that debased and debasing crowd! He therefore decided to make a final effort. A message was sent to the Maharaja, through Wadya, that during the few preceding days the Maharaja had allowed himself to play into the hands of his old associates; that the Maharaja had forgotten that Dadabhai had been invited to work as a Dewan, and not as a *karkoon* (clerk), merely to register Sircar's decrees. In response to the wishes of the Maharaja, Dadabhai had agreed to the retention of those old Durbaris, but after having shown much forbearance he had come to the conclusion that it was absolutely necessary that they should be sent out of Baroda. Then followed the list of courtiers who should go—Damodar, Bapubhai, Govindrao Mama, Kharkar, and several others. Nana Saheb had himself offered to leave Baroda.

As usual, the Maharaja expressed his regret that Dadabhai thought he had been treated as a *karkoon*; he did not mean to

trench upon the Dewan's powers, and promised to place full confidence in him. He could not, however, agree to send away his Durbaris. Eventually, one day, in the presence of Damodar, he said to Wadya: "Tell Dadabhai, I may agree to send away the rest, but not Damodar. There are two men in the world I cannot do without—Dadabhai and Damodar. I would sooner build a golden bridge from Bombay to London than think of parting from either of them."

It could hardly have occurred to the childish Prince that in thus insisting on retaining the bane as well as the antidote, he was paying a left-handed compliment to Dadabhai. Wadya, however, communicated the Maharaja's flattering message to Dadabhai. After a hearty laugh over the honour of being ranked with Damodar, Dadabhai said: "Well, Homi, now this must be our final notice to him. Tell him that I have definitely made up my mind to resign and that I should be obliged if he would relieve me as early as possible. As for you and others, I would leave it to each one of you to decide."

"I am going," said Wadya.

"And we too," exclaimed Bal Mangesh and Shahabuddin, who were present.

When the officers of the Bombay Government, whose services had been lent to Dadabhai only a couple of months before, heard this, they said they would not like to stay for even a few hours after his departure. The decision was solemnly conveyed to Mulharrao. He kept silent as though he were attending a funeral. After some minutes, Wadya took leave of him without waiting for a reply.

Dadabhai had a busy time disposing of all the work in hand and leaving notes for his successor. Then he called on Sir Lewis Pelly to bid good-bye. Sir Lewis persuaded him to continue for some time until a successor was appointed. The Maharaja, however, seemed disinclined to choose anyone as Dewan.

The day after—it was Christmas Day—Dadabhai had a long conversation with the Maharaja in the office of the Governor-General's Agent. He reminded the Prince that it was distinctly

understood that he was to enjoy His Highness's confidence and that he would resign the moment it was withdrawn. "Latterly, Maharaj," said Dadabhai, "your confidence was so unmistakably given to the old Durbaris that it was impossible to ignore the fact that I as your responsible Minister could no longer count upon the support which I had the right to expect. It was useless and altogether inadvisable in such circumstances that I should continue in office. It was a question whether they or I should give way, and as they would not yield, I had to resign."

The Gaekwar protested that his confidence in his Dewan was unchanged. He was, however, shrewdly silent about the old crowd, nor did he say that he was prepared to place himself unreservedly in the hands of the Dewan.

Some days afterwards, when Dadabhai returned to his office after the usual visit to the Agent to the Governor-General, his assistants found that he seemed worried and wan. He went straight to his room and did not return for several minutes—a very unusual procedure. Wadya's colleagues asked him to go and inquire what the matter was.

Wadya ran to Dadabhai's room and asked him whether he was quite well. "Oh yes, Homi," he replied. "I am coming presently to the office. I want to tell you something. Please ask the other officers also to wait for me."

Within a few minutes he was at his desk and asked all of them to go near him. "I want to tell you," he said in a low voice, "what I have heard just now from Sir Lewis. He first asked me whether there was any likelihood of my reconsidering the question of my resignation, because he had reason to believe the Maharaja would once more bring pressure on us to stay. I told him that we had all finally and definitely made up our minds. Sir Lewis then said that he wished to tell me something, but that before doing so he wished to know for certain that after having heard him I would not change my mind. I said he might depend upon it. Thereupon he told me that he had heard that a Havildar and others had made important confessions concerning the attempt on Colonel Phayre's life, incriminating the Maharaja.

He said that he would not have brought the Maharaja needlessly into trouble, but that those men had voluntarily made statements which called for investigation. Sir Lewis then took me with him to the cells of the two men who had confessed their guilt. He told them in my presence to tell the truth. The men replied they had not been coerced by anyone; what they had said was true; it was their *takdir* (fate). It was necessary that the Maharaja should know it; and he was informed that he had been accused of complicity in the attempt to poison Colonel Phayre. He has, of course, protested that he had nothing to do with it."

There was a pause; Dadabhai was at this stage overcome by emotion. Evidently he was considering whether he would be doing the right thing in leaving Baroda when such a serious charge was hanging over the dishonoured head of the Maharaja. He then got up from his chair and said: "I have been considering for some time what in the circumstances we should do. Before I had the slightest idea that such a storm was likely to break over the head of the Maharaja, I gave Sir Lewis the assurance that I was going. I must adhere to that understanding, and I think we may all stick to our resolution without any violence to our conscience. We did our best for him so long as we could do so with self-respect; we had no alternative but to tender our resignation when we found he was proof against reason and rectitude. We must go."

As no Dewan was appointed, Dadabhai and his colleagues gave over charge to the Indian officers whose services had been lent by the British Government. They, too, had submitted their resignations but were instructed by Sir Lewis to remain at their posts.

On January 11, 1875, when Dadabhai and his assistants left for the station, the Gaekwar, who professed to be very sorry and sick at heart, went with them and stood on the station platform. Till the moment of departure he went on persuading them to remain. They, however, took cordial leave of him, and he stood on the platform watching the train as it steamed slowly out of the station, which was crowded with the leading citizens of

Baroda who had gone there to give Dadabhai a send-off. The Maharaja then proceeded to his coach to return to the palace. As soon as he was seated, he smacked his thigh, as an expression of glee, and said to his attendants, with a smile, "Now you have seen how I managed to get rid of that man!"

Benighted, purblind Prince! He could not yet see the clouds that were gathering on the horizon. Dropping the pilot, who had steered his ship through so many storms and shoals, was a matter of no concern to him; nay, he returned home with a sense of relief!

On that very day there was a great movement of troops from Poona to Bombay, and when Dadabhai and his party reached Bombay they saw a regiment despatched to the Maharaja's capital. Another followed the day after. Hearing of the arrival of the troops, Mulharrao felt certain he was nearing a great crisis.

"What does this mean? Do you know why these regiments are coming?" he asked Dr. Palanji Pestonji, Dadabhai's medical adviser, the only man of Dadabhai's party who had remained behind because the Ranees of the Durbar would not let him go.

"I know nothing, Maharaj," replied Palanji.

"I suspect mischief. You must send a telegram to Dadabhai to come at once. Ask him to bring Homi too with him."

The message was promptly despatched. Dadabhai asked Wadya to see him on the following day in order to consider what to do. He had resigned the Dewanship; he would not go back as Dewan. But when the ill-starred Prince was in trouble and wanted him to be near him, could he refuse to go as a friend in need? This was the question he wished to discuss with Wadya.

Wadya took a carriage at once to go to Dadabhai's house. Passing the *Times of India* office, he saw a big placard with these words in bold type—

### "ARREST OF MULHARRAO."

He placed the sheet giving the news in Dadabhai's hands, and said: "What is the use of our going now? Nemesis has overtaken the man."



On that fateful Thursday, January 14, with the first faint streaks of dawn, indications were already discernible that the Maharaja was doomed. When he went to the Governor-General's Agent to pay the customary visit, he was informed that a proclamation had been received to the effect that the Government of India had suspended him from power, pending the verdict of a Commission which was to be appointed shortly. The Agent's room being under the British flag, the Maharaja could not be arrested there, but with His Highness's permission the Agent would accompany him to his own territory "and there perform the necessary ceremony." The Gaekwar asked that he should be arrested at once and spared further humiliation, but it could not be done. He thereupon followed the Agent and his military staff to the bridge dividing the limits of the camp from those of the city, ready to give himself up. He had gold bars in his treasury worth four million rupees. These he had distributed equally among his two wives before he was arrested.

Soon a Commission was appointed. The Maharaja's solicitors, Messrs. Jefferson and Payne, sent their managing clerk, Bhaishankar Nanabhai, to Baroda to gather material for the defence. None, however, ventured to open his lips to help him in his work. Returning to Bombay, almost empty-handed, he went to Dadabhai to get information and points for defence. Dadabhai and Wadya had some papers with them, which they made over to the solicitors. It was decided that the line of defence should be that three days before the attempt on the Resident's life the Maharaja had, by constitutional means, asked for his removal; that there was every reason to believe that the request would be complied with and that, in fact, it was subsequently conceded. Where, then, was the necessity to take the Resident's life? If the decision of Government had been unfavourable and an attempt had been made on the Resident's life, there might have been some ground for suspicion.

Wadya was engaged to watch the interests of Lakhshmibai, and Bal Mangesh for the other queen. The most damning evidence against the Maharaja was that given by Damodar, his perfidious

private secretary. He spoke in a very low tone, with eyes fixed on the floor. Counsel for the Prince, the famous British lawyer, Serjeant Ballantine, asked that he should be made to speak up and look the Maharaja in the face. The villain, however, could not lift his eyes even for a single glance. When he had finished, Mulharrao turned to Wadya and cried in anguish and in tears: "You all whom I have sinned against, you whom I cast off at the instigation of this wretch, you are now standing by me, whereas this scoundrel, whom I considered my own, has conspired against me!"

The Commission was divided in opinion. Complicity in the attempt to poison Colonel Phayre could not be fastened on the Maharaja. Nevertheless the British Government decided that he should be deposed on counts other than those which formed part of the indictment, namely, notorious misconduct and gross misgovernment. The arrangements were kept secret pending the orders of the Secretary of State, but rumours of annexation of the State were rife all over India. There was an uproar in England. English journals, including *The Times*, condemned the Government of India for taking proceedings against the Maharaja on insufficient evidence. It was reported that Whitehall was not in favour of the Calcutta proposals. At last, however, the orders of the Secretary of State were received, sanctioning the deposition and deportation of the distracted ruler.

Hearing this, Mulharrao prayed that his infant son by Lakhshimibai should be recognized as heir apparent. The request was refused. The widow of Khunderao, Maha Ranee Saheb Jannabai, was allowed to adopt a member of the Gaekwar family as his successor. Happily, she adopted one who, every inch a king, was destined to give a new life to Baroda, to change the face of its history, and to raise the name of Gaekwar from dust to its former glory, winning for himself the richly deserved title of "The Modern Bhoj," to wit, Sir Sayajirao Gaekwar, the present ruler of Baroda.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the death of this Prince, since these lines were written, Baroda has lost its most enlightened ruler.

After the necessary precautions had been taken for the maintenance of order in case of disturbance, Mulharrao was taken secretly to the station yard and put in a special train, which was held there in readiness. On the same day (April 23) Wadya and Bal Mangesh were passing in a carriage through one of the streets of Baroda when, all of a sudden, the driver pulled up the reins to enable a man to throw a note into the vehicle. It was from the Maharaja, addressed in Marathi to Bal Mangesh:

They say they want to depose me. I asked that my son should be put on the throne. They refused. I gather that they want to send me to Madras. Do what you can for me.

Your sinful

MULHARRAO

At once the two ran to the station to find out whether he had already been, or was about to be, spirited away. A special train was in readiness alongside. Seeing them, the Maharaja came out of his compartment on the corridor. "Salaam!" he said in a low voice, "I am going!" Then, with his fingers, he made several gestures, which they could not make out. One of his attendants, who happened to be there, explained to them that Sircar desired that they should write to Dadabhai. So the disconsolate man believed that if anyone could save him, or save the throne for his son, it was Dadabhai!

## CHAPTER XV

### IN THE CIVIC CHAMBER

**D**URING those tumultuous thirteen months in Baroda, Dadabhai had aged almost as many years. But for the wear and tear of those days of anxiety and worry, he might, perhaps, have lived to be a centenarian.

Was he down-hearted? Not at all. To be torn away from the scene of one's labours, just when one had laid the foundation and commenced rearing an edifice according to one's own design, must always be a matter for regret. Looking back, however, over those stirring days of his stewardship, Dadabhai must have felt that he had every reason to be proud of his achievements. The momentum he had given to the cause of good government had driven his successors irresistibly forward.

Not to shut one's eyes to the existence of evil, not to have any compromise with evil, but to resist it and fight it in all its forms, at all times, and in all places, is the keynote of the creed of the Prophet Zarathushtra. Whoever fights falsehood, injustice, corruption, oppression, is the Creator's ally in destroying the powers of evil. The Prophet himself was a noble example of such a struggle; and Dadabhai, to whom life in all its bearings was but an application of the teaching of the Prophet of Iran, might well have consoled himself with the thought that he had counteracted evil in all its manifestations, regardless of consequences. The predicament in which he had been placed was exactly fitted to draw out some of his finest qualities—his strenuous devotion to duty, his high sense of justice, his dogged determination and perseverance, his magnanimity and forbearance, his love of truth and his hatred for hypocrisy and sham. True, he had not succeeded in bringing prosperity to the State, but even in the most trying circumstances

such as would appal the boldest, he had striven faithfully to rout the forces of evil.

It has been a matter of regret to both of us (wrote Sir Bartle Frere, on behalf of himself and Sir Erskine Perry) that you were not allowed an opportunity of carrying out the reforms you desired, and thus making one of the most interesting experiments possible in a Native State. But you have the consolation of having done your best. I do not see that any human being could have done more under the circumstances.

Dadabhai might well have remained content with such an estimate of his work, but when he saw in the Baroda Blue Books of 1875 the letters that had passed between the Resident and the Government of Bombay in which the capacity and honour of himself and his colleagues were impugned, he considered that a rejoinder was necessary. The withdrawal of the Resident from the capital of the Gaekwar was in itself a crushing reply to such calumny. But the Resident's misrepresentations caused much anguish. He drew up a long statement and requested the Secretary of State to publish it as a Blue Book in fairness to himself and his colleagues. His Lordship in Council, however, took the incident as closed; he was not prepared to recommend the presentation of the statement to Parliament. Dadabhai then printed the statement himself, which gives one an idea of the manner in which the Resident had rendered his task, which was extremely difficult in itself, far more harassing.

Dadabhai had to go, under medical advice, to Tithal, near Bulsar, for rest and change. Returning to Bombay, after about four months, he was usefully occupied in congenial pursuits. On July 26, 1875, he was elected a member of the Municipal Corporation of Bombay for the same district in which, fifty years ago, he was born. In the civic chamber he soon made his mark as a close student of municipal questions, endowed with an inexhaustible store of energy and an eye for precision. His knowledge of public finance, his proficiency in mathematics and skill in marshalling statistics were of immense value to the Corporation, where the

capacity of most of the members to deal with figures stood very low indeed.

Within three months, on his fifty-first birthday (September 4), Dadabhai was elected a member of the Town Council. The membership of the Council, which was the executive committee of the Corporation, carried with it an honorarium of thirty rupees for attendance at each meeting; but Dadabhai, who regarded civic service as a social obligation—the redemption of the debt he owed to society—informed the Municipal Secretary that he would not accept the honorarium.

The Bombay Municipality had taken a loan from Government for the construction of the Vihar Water Works. Dadabhai discovered that in calculating the instalment of principal and interest payable to Government the Accountant-General had resorted to a method of calculation that would have entailed an additional payment of fifty lakhs of rupees to Government. At a meeting of the Town Council, held on January 25, 1876, he submitted a long minute on the subject. It showed that although the intention was to charge the Municipality simple interest at the rate of 4 per cent per annum, the method of crediting the monthly instalments paid to liquidate the loan led to interest being charged on interest. Voluminous memoranda were written on this minute by various officials and councillors. The Accountant-General refused to admit that he had done anything in contravention of the provisions of the Municipal Act, the real culprits were the framers of the Act who had failed to give effect to the intentions of the high contracting parties. Dadabhai had to write more minutes to justify his calculations and contentions. Eventually, representations were made to Government, and, failing redress, to the Secretary of State for India. Before, however, the curtain was rung down on this controversy, Dadabhai resigned his office as a councillor (August 1876), as he had arranged to proceed to England to look after the business of his firm.

Dadabhai's compilations on the Vihar Loan question had astonished his colleagues. They were a marvel of civic enthusiasm

and individual effort for the promotion of communal welfare. But there was another exhaustive minute, written by him on a subject much more intricate and technical, which impressed them even more. It established completely the professor's powers to master, and energy and patience to elucidate, even the most technical problems connected with the municipal government of the city. The Water Department had proposed the construction of additional water works at a tremendous cost. To check the calculations regarding the daily supply of water to the city on which the demand for the additional supply was based, Dadabhai called for various particulars from the Water Department. Receiving no reply, he sent a reminder; but no information was forthcoming because, it was explained later, there was no staff to collect the numerous details required. Nothing daunted, he proceeded to examine the problem independently of official statistics, just as he had done in connexion with the problem of the total production of India. Using his own calculations, and bringing to bear on them his amazing analytical faculty, he arrived at the conclusion that the departmental method of distribution of water was defective. After an examination of the whole question, he indicated how it could be arranged to give the city a constant supply of fourteen gallons per head. It was decided to submit this minute to departmental criticism. By the time the Municipal Commissioner's report on the subject was received, Dadabhai had relinquished his seat on the Council. The controversy with Government concerning the Vehar Loan went on for years until Dadabhai rejoined the Corporation in 1883. It was not over until he went again to England in 1886. There, although engrossed in a contest for Parliamentary election, he knocked incessantly at the door of the India Office for justice.

Such unique work, in the financial interests of the City, elicited admiration not only from his colleagues but even from the officers who were baffled by it. When his resignation of August 26, 1876, was placed before the Town Council and the Corporation, a special vote of thanks was accorded to him. It was an exceptional honour. There was no precedent for a vote of

thanks to a retiring member. In his case, however, there was a strong feeling that his special services in the exploration and elucidation of difficult municipal questions merited a distinct acknowledgment.

At the time Dadabhai thought he had received the highest honour that it was in the power of the Corporation to confer on any member or on any citizen, but a still higher honour from the local parliament was in store for him—the address of welcome presented to him in 1894 on his return to his homeland after his election to the House of Commons.

Early in the year 1876 a Bill was passed limiting the jurisdiction of the Civil Courts throughout the Bombay Presidency in matters relating to land revenue. It made revenue officers independent of the Civil Courts—a dangerous principle which provoked opposition from all quarters. A requisition was sent to the Sheriff of Bombay to call a public meeting to ask the Secretary of State to veto the Bill. The meeting was held in the Town Hall of Bombay on April 18, 1876. Dadabhai had a hand in drawing up a memorial which was eventually sent to the Secretary of State.

In August 1875 another requisition was received by the Sheriff of Bombay for convening a public meeting to take steps for according a cordial welcome to the Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII) on his visit to Bombay. Dadabhai was a prominent subscriber to the fund that was raised for the purpose. His name also appears in the list of subscribers to the fund raised during the same year for the relief of people affected by floods in Ahmedabad and the villages along the banks of the Sabarnati river.

It is time to have another glance into Dadabhai's household. During his absence in England Dadabhai's pupil and friend Muncherji Dadina looked after his family and attended to all his personal affairs. The families of the two friends lived on such intimate terms that three matrimonial alliances were formed, whilst the brides and bridegrooms were yet in their teens. Dadabhai's only son, Adi, was engaged to Dadina's daughter Vir;



his first daughter Shirin to Dadina's son Fram; and his second daughter Maki to Fram's younger brother Homi.

Adi, as we have already noticed, was taken by Dadabhai, at the age of five, to England. After he passed the London Matriculation examination, it was arranged that he should qualify himself for the Indian Medical Service. He was a very active member of a volunteer corps when he was a student at Owens College in Manchester. Owing to an accident one day, a gun-carriage went over his left leg and arm. The injury sustained by him disqualified him for the Medical Service. He therefore returned to Bombay and joined the Grant Medical College, where he obtained the Anderson Scholarship for proficiency in surgery and surgical anatomy.

The spirited youth was a keen sportsman and a gay soul—Dadina, on the other hand, was an orthodox Parsi and a stern disciplinarian, affectionate by nature but quick-tempered. The two could not agree on many points, and the weekly letters which Dadabhai received did not always make pleasant reading. The chief cause of difference was Adi's fondness for fire-arms. He had already injured a leg by accident, into the upper segment of the same ill-fated leg he sent a bullet in another accident in Bombay, whilst he was cleaning his rifle. Soon after his recovery, there was another mishap. A revolver loaded and placed on the table went off and damaged some furniture. Dadina thereupon asked Ardeshir Moos, a friend of the family, to keep the arms in his custody until Dadabhai returned to India. This upset Adi. Dadina wrote

Ardeshir Kaka's grandson, who had gone to see Adi, narrowly escaped! Mr Moos allows him the use of it at his own place, but Adi does not like it. Mr Moos also intends to take him to Powai where he can have his shooting to his heart's content. It would be better if you write to him to give up the idea of using the firearms at the Khetwadi house and give his sole attention to his studies.

"With the growing wants of the children," continued Dadina, "I cannot be too economical. Shirin calls me *Chokkha Marwadi*

(a veritable Shylock). . . . Adi also thinks Rs. 3 are not sufficient for him, but when his other wants are supplied separately, I see no reason why I should increase this pocket allowance."

Dadabhai increased the allowance to Rs. 5, Adi, however, held out for Rs. 7 and got it.

At this distance I can hardly guide you (said Dadabhai to Dadina, March 8, 1880) in the matter of the requirements of the family, beyond saying that we have to cut our coat according to our cloth. It is all very well for Adi and children to ask for this and that and to try and look big people before others. But that will not do. The prospect before us is not of a very cheering character. They must live in a way now which they may not have with regret to give up afterwards.

There was also a conflict of views between Adi and Dadina concerning certain orthodox rites. Dadabhai asked Adi not to interfere with the domestic customs and hurt the feelings of the elder members of the family. He was pleased to learn soon afterwards that his advice had the desired effect and that there was an improvement in Adi's relations with Dadina. But Adi was not quite happy at home. "He complains," wrote Dadina to Dadabhai, "that he has no social comforts at home. Gulbai wants to control the son and the son insists on controlling the mother!" It was not, therefore, surprising, although it came as a shock to Dadabhai, that without waiting for his final examination Adi wanted to marry and to have a congenial companion by his side.

I have written to Adi (said Dadabhai, in his letter to Dadina, May 7, 1880), that though I dissuaded him from marrying till he passed his final, if he still desires that the marriage should not be delayed, he may have his own way. You know that I am against useless marriage expenses. Nor can I afford to incur any such expenses. Let the marriage be quiet. Even if I can afford, I would not have expensive marriages. Talk this matter over with Adi and do as you two think best for this object.

The family wished that the marriage ceremony should be performed when Dadabhai should return from England. As,

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The family wished that the marriage ceremony should be performed when Dadabhai should return from England. As,

however, his business affairs required his presence in London, he asked them not to wait for him.

Adi's marriage will be a simple affair as you suggest (said Dadina). He has pitched on the Dewali Day—the day last year he sent the bullet in his thigh. He says he wants to make us merry on that very day this year.

Adi's marriage brought sunshine in his life. In the following year Dadabhai learnt with joy that he had become the grandfather of a girl. Two years later, Adi took his degree of Licentiate of Medicine and Surgery and was placed in charge of the Civil Hospital in Cutch Mandvi.

In connexion with another alliance in the family, a few years later, poor Muncherji Dadina found the tables turned against him. It was he who, on this occasion, insisted on his son Homi marrying Maki before proceeding to England, to prosecute his studies, and it was the son, supported by his fiancée, who rebelled against the idea. The matter was referred to Dadabhai. He agreed with the young couple, despite the misgivings of Dadina that Homi might bring an English wife to his orthodox home. Homi went to England for study. Until he returned home, as a qualified mechanical engineer, unyoked to an English girl, his poor father had no peace of mind. Of life in England generally old Dadina had been given a harrowing picture. In one of his letters to Dadabhai (June 30, 1888) he wrote: "One elderly man (a Kapadia) who returned from England a fortnight ago tells me that it is a fashion there to go to the theatre almost daily. I hope my son is not doing such a thing."

Maki took her L.R.C.P. in the year 1897, and F.S.P.G. of Edinburgh and L.M. (Dublin) later. Dadabhai wished that she should stay with him and start her practice in London, but she was wanted by her mother in India. So she returned to Bombay and married Homi Dadina in December of that year. She, too, had her differences with Muncherji Dadina. Being as spirited and independent as her father and brother, she refused to give way on many an occasion and Dadabhai had to smooth

matters. Barring such casual incidents, however, the weekly flow of letters from his dear ones was a source of joy to Dadabhai. He could not bear the idea of having to go even occasionally without the weekly budget of news, nor would he neglect writing to them. Amid the splendid cares of his patriotic mission in England his letters break out into longings for the news of the family. He yearned to have a line at least from each of them. Adi's three sons, Jal, Kershasp, and Sarosh, and five daughters, Meher, Gosi, Nargiz, Perin and Khorshed, wrote charming letters to him. The predicament of all—grandfather and grandchildren—is exquisitely reflected in the following paragraph in one of the letters of Dadabhai to the children (September 2, 1897).

Maki writes to me "as they sit down with their pens in their hands, saying what shall we write every week to father." Now, my dear children, I shall be satisfied even if you only say, "we are well." I like to have letters from you all. You may write to me what you have done at school during the week—just as you told me a lot of things, when I was in Bombay and saw you all in the evening. Write what you hear, what fun, if any, you had at school or elsewhere.

A letter written from Karachi by Fram Dadina, of a later date (July 15, 1903), contained a "prophecy" about one of the grandchildren.

My mother dear is with us and she delights us all by her quaint sayings. She reads the papers the whole day and gives us all the benefit when free. She is proud of her Kershasp and thinks we are going to have another Dad in him. I hope she will turn out a true prophetess. Yet the young fellow has quite won her over by his love. He is all in all to her and if we say he is nothing like Dad, then you also come in as having succeeded through opportunities. She says, "let Dad train him up, then see the result!"

In some traits of character at least—chivalry, intrepidity, and spirit of service and sacrifice—Kershasp soon distinguished himself as a valiant grandson of an illustrious grandfather. When the Great War broke, on the left Christ's College (Cambridge) to

join the Middlesex Regiment and went out to France early in 1915 as a lance-corporal. Later, as a sergeant, he became the hero of several daring exploits. He was wounded in a charge and sent to a hospital in Cheshire, and was subsequently selected, for temporary commission, in recognition of his distinguished service in France.

Grandfathers have their joys heightened by the children of their children, but these joys are seldom unmixed with sorrows born of bereavements in the family. In 1875 Dadabhai grieved for the death of his mother, dearer to him than anything else in this world. A more cruel blow was to befall him later, when he was at the height of his glory, in the year 1893.

## CHAPTER XVI

# THE CONDITION OF INDIA

MEMORABLE as was Dadabhai's work as a Municipal Councillor during 1876, by far the more illustrious achievement of that year was his paper on the subject of the poverty of India, which he read before a crowded meeting held under the auspices of the Bombay Branch of the East India Association. Two years later, the paper was published in London in pamphlet form—a prelude to the bulky volume that was to follow a quarter of a century later, under the title *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*.

Dadabhai's object in reverting to this topic of India's poverty was to produce additional facts and figures and to cite further authorities for his statement that India was sinking more and more in poverty and that the system of administration of the country was largely responsible for her misery. Statistics were the backbone of his paper, but Dadabhai made it perfectly clear that with imperfect material at command, and without the means to employ a staff to work out all the details, he could give only approximate results.

The principle of my calculations (said he) is largely this I have taken the largest one or two kinds of produce of a province to represent all its produce, as it would be too much labour for me to work out every produce great and small. I have taken the whole cultivated area of each district, the produce per acre, and the price of the produce, and simple multiplication and addition will give you both the quantity and value of the total produce. From it, also, you can get the correct average of produce per acre and of prices for the whole province, as in this way you have all the necessary elements taken into account.

After elaborate calculations, Dadabhai said he had clearly



established that the value of the production of one of the best provinces in India was Rs. 20 per head per annum and that this confirmed him in his previous contention that 40s. was a liberal estimate for the total production per head of population. He then proceeded to examine "the bare wants of a human being to keep him in ordinary good health and decency" in the light of estimates of the necessities of life for emigrant coolies, for Indian emigrants carried to British and foreign colonies west of the Cape of Good Hope, for common agricultural labourers in various parts of the Bombay Presidency, for the lowest paid servants in Government service, and for prisoners in gaols. The conclusion was that even for such food and clothing as a criminal obtains there was hardly enough production even in a good season, "leaving alone all little luxuries, all social and religious wants, all expenses of occasions of joy and sorrow, and provision for a bad season."

Next came under review statistics of imports and exports. From 1835 to 1872 India imported goods worth only about £943,000,000 against exports valued at £1,430,000,000, leaving a balance of about £500,000,000. This, contended Dadabhai, did not represent the total tribute which India annually paid to England. Had interest been calculated, the drain would have amounted to a higher figure. Dadabhai then quoted statements made by British officials to establish the main contention that most of the ills of India were due to the heavy tribute which she had to pay to England. For example, one of the Commissioners of Revenue in the Deccan, who afterwards became a member of Council, Saville Marriot, had stated in a letter written in the year 1836 that India had been "verging to the lowest ebb of pauperism" and that it would be "difficult to satisfy the mind that any country could bear such a drain upon its resources without sustaining very serious injury."

To drive his argument home to English people, Dadabhai held up before the audience the following picture, taken from Draper's *Intellectual Development of Europe*, of England herself, when she was a tributary to the Pope.

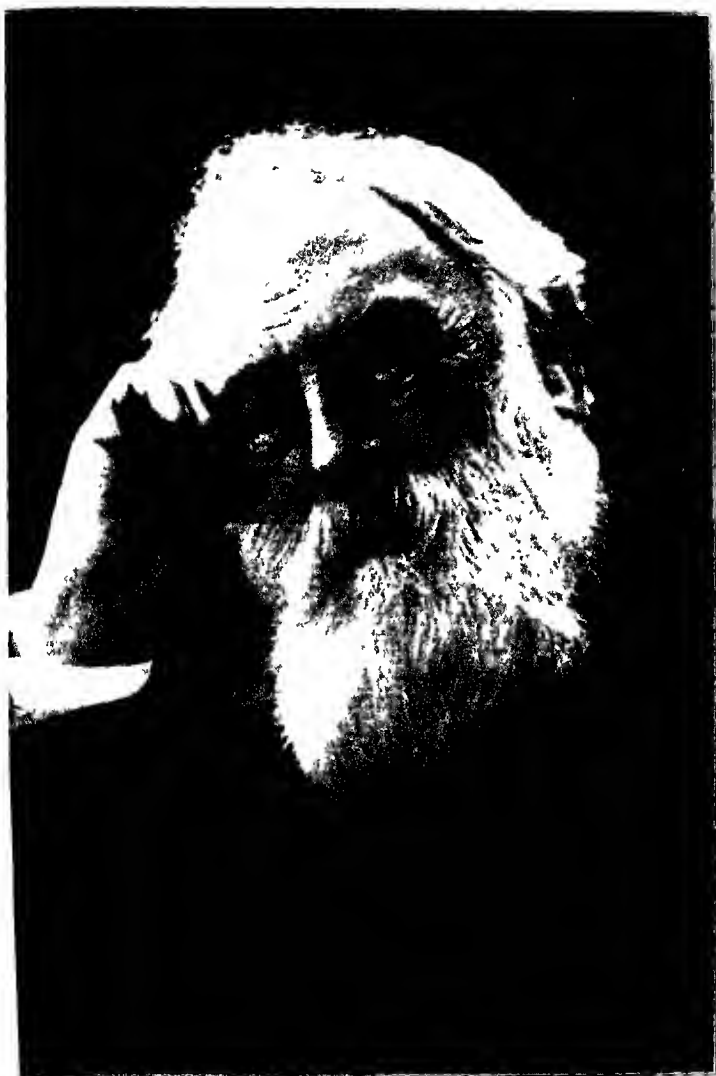
In fact, through the operation of the Crusades, all Europe was tributary to the Pope (Innocent III). A steady drain of money from every realm. Fifty years after the time of which we are speaking, Robert Grosseteste, the Bishop of Lincoln and friend of Roger Bacon, caused to be ascertained the amount received by foreign ecclesiastics in England. He found it to be thrice the income of the king himself. This was on the occasion of Innocent IV, demanding provision to be made for three hundred additional Italian clergy by the Church of England. . . In England—for ages a mine of wealth to Rome—the tendency of things was shown by such facts as the remonstrances of the Commons with the Crown on the appointment of ecclesiastics to all the great offices, and the allegations made by the “Good Parliament” as to the amount of money drawn by Rome from the Kingdom. They asserted that it was five times as much as the taxes levied by the king, and that the Pope’s revenue from England was greater than the revenue of any prince in Christendom. . . . There were forests extending over great districts; fens, forty or fifty miles in length, reeking with miasma and fever, though round the walls of the abbeys there might be beautiful gardens, green lawns, shady walks, and many murmuring streams . . . The peasant’s cabin was made of reeds or sticks, plastered over with mud. His fire was chimneyless—often it was made of peat. . . . Vermin in abundance in the clothing and beds. The common food was peas, vetches, fern-roots, and even the bark of trees . . . The population, sparse as it was, was perpetually thinned by pestilence and want. Nor was the state of the townsman better than that of the rustic; his bed was a bag of straw, with a fair round log for his pillow . . . It was a melancholy social condition when nothing intervened between reed cabins in the fen, the miserable wigwams of villages, and the conspicuous walls of the castle and the monastery. . . . Rural life had but little improved since the time of Caesar; in its physical aspect it was altogether neglected. . . . England, at the close of the age of faith, had for long been a chief pecuniary tributary to Italy, the source from which large revenues had been drawn, the fruitful field in which herds of Italian ecclesiastics had been pastured. . . . At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the island was far more backward, intellectually and politically, than is commonly supposed.

This parallel, remarkable in many ways, presented a picture of the state of India. The country, urged Dadabhai, needed industrialization on a large scale. Industry was limited by capital. Where was the capital to come from? India was woefully deficient in that respect. What were the root causes of the insufficiency? The main cause being the drain of India's wealth to England, she was entitled to the supply of capital from her on easy terms for the development of her trade and industry.

Another important question raised was that of protection. Instructions had been then issued by the Secretary of State for the abolition of the duties on cotton. The real object, said Dadabhai, was to smother the infant factories in India, the ostensible reason being free trade.

Now I do not want to say anything about the real selfish objects of the Manchesterians, or what the political necessities of a Conservative Government may be under Manchester pressure. I give credit to the Secretary of State for honesty of purpose, and take the reason itself that is given on this question, viz. free trade. I like free trade, but after what I have said to-night, you will easily see that free trade between England and India in a matter like this is something like a race between a starving, exhausted invalid, and a strong man with a horse to ride on. Free trade between countries which have equal command over their own resources is one thing; but even then the colonies snapped their fingers at all such talk. But what can India do? Before powerful English interests, India must and does go to the wall. Young colonies, says Mill, need protection. India needs it in a far larger degree, independent of the needs of revenue which alone have compelled the retention of the present duties. Let India have its present drain brought within reasonable limits, and India will be quite prepared for free trade. With a pressure of taxation nearly double in proportion to that of England, from an income of one-fifteenth, and an exhaustive drain besides, we are asked to compete with England in free trade.

In spite of its incompleteness, Dadabhai's paper was the most illuminating document ever published on that most contentious



*[By permission of the Hyndman Literary Committee]*

H. M. HYNDMAN



problem of Indian economics. Its method of approach was rough and ready; its manner of handling and sifting statistics all his own; the process of reasoning and the principles adopted in arriving at conclusions were debatable. Nevertheless, his estimate of the national income was roughly as accurate as it could then have been, and the best corroboration of his calculations was the estimate given by Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer) and Sir David Barbour in the year 1882, namely Rs. 27 per head. Despite the increase in agricultural and industrial output during the subsequent years, Lord Curzon's estimate in 1901 was only Rs. 30.

The period between 1877 and 1881 is generally regarded as the quietest time in Dadabhai's life. Before that period, wherever he had been placed, his amazing energy, his massive intellect and single-minded devotion to duty had arrested attention. Ever since he had left the pulpit of the *Rast Gofar*, he had broken new ground wherever his destiny had taken him. Into every institution with which he had been connected he had breathed new life. How could such a restless soul lapse into silence or somnolence?

It would appear from certain statements made during his lifetime as though, during the gloom cast over India by Lord Lytton's viceroyalty, Dadabhai's robust faith in British justice had been rudely shaken and as though he had decided to retire from public life. One of the obnoxious measures which disfigured the Statute book of the day was the Vernacular Press Act—the "Black Act," as it was called—curtailing the freedom of Indian newspapers. Another incident was the second Afghan war which, fought in the interests of England, saddled India with a heavy burden. Then there had been the attempt to foist on India the charges of the transport of troops to Malta during the Russo-Turkish war. But a will such as his would not bend before such injustice. The disasters referred to should have rather stirred him to still sterner struggles. In fact, Dadabhai had neither become a recluse nor taken the vow of silence. Those five years were, no doubt, years of gloom, of seclusion too, but not of

inaction. They were, on the contrary, years of strenuous effort to keep his business going and also to study day and night the tremendous problems bearing on the poverty of India and to enter emphatic protests against the economic policy of the rulers. Instead of the tongue the pen was exceptionally active.

Ever since the establishment of the East India Association, Dadabhai's business interests had receded into the background. If there were other means of supporting himself, he would have been most happy to retire from business altogether. But in the absence of such means, he had kept up his connexion with his firm, although he was unable to pay close attention to its work. Towards the latter half of the year 1876, however, it became necessary for him to take a more active interest in business than he had done before. From the voluminous correspondence carried on with his partners, until the year 1881, it appears that during this period he had to encounter many financial difficulties and had, therefore, to pay constant attention to the business of his firm. Letters exchanged every week with his partners, when he was in Bombay, show that they sought his assistance in regard to various details and kept him informed of the pettiest transactions. It was not, however, a profitable business, as would appear from the following extracts from a letter (August 26, 1881) from Dady Dossabhai Cama, who held Dadabhai's power of attorney to look after his business in England during his absence

I am really very sorry to see that there are very remote chances of your getting any money from Mr. M. I feel greatly for you that Mr. M. should have behaved so badly. Of course, you must be trying your best, but there is no help when people play so false. Your losing the money should not make any change in our business relations. My arrangements will remain as they are. . . As the case now stands, you will never be able to make up the former loss, coupled as it is with this great deficit of Mr. M. Would it not be therefore advisable to wind up this firm's business

immediately so that people who may have dealings with you may run the least risk :

In another letter (October 7), Cama wrote :

If, as you say, there is a chance of getting some good business by keeping your name on the firm, do not hesitate to do so, as it would be worth running some risk for such an advantage. I should like you to come to some final decision before the end of this year, if possible.

Dadabhai thereupon decided to wind up his firm, but to continue doing business on his own account and to book all orders to the Camas direct. Cama wrote: "As proposed, you can inform the Company to book all orders to us direct unless, as you say, there might be fear of missing some good business by transferring, in which case that particular business can be carried out in your name."

It was one of the most trying periods in Dadabhai's commercial career. Despite the daily pressure of work and difficulties, however, his thirst for knowledge and his zeal for research into the material condition of India remained unabated. In the midst of all his worries he was bent upon collecting encyclopaedic details about the salaries drawn by Englishmen since the days of the East India Company and asked his booksellers in England to send him numerous publications. There never was before, and it is not known whether there has since been, a more avid buyer of Blue Books. Failing to get everything he wanted, he asked Cama to tell the booksellers to make a diligent search for at least some of the old Reports and Budgets he wanted. Cama wrote in reply (September 30, 1881):

Messrs. Harris are trying to find out the Blue Book you mention, "East India Salaries, etc." They don't find any, but there is the Budget Book of this year, which would not contain salaries, etc. If that is the one you want, let me know.

In another letter (October 14) in the midst of details about orders for machinery, roller skins, watches, bracelets, anatomist



plates, we find Cama reverting to the subject of East India salaries:

Since addressing you by the last mail, I have yours of the 20th September. Messrs. Harris have enquired, but they don't find that there is any other report on salaries of Civil Servants except the Budget Estimate which they have sent us and will be forwarded to you in the next despatch.

In yet another business communication we find the following entry:

Messrs. Harris inform us that the monthly lists of Blue Books are always forwarded in the Evening Mails, but as you might not have got them for June and August, they will be sent again.

Dadabhai's thirst for statistics was, indeed, insatiable. Cama was buying for him cart-loads of official publications. In a letter of November 4, he said: "Some time ago you sent an order for a long list of old Blue Books. Messrs. Harris are ferreting them out, as it is difficult to get these books anywhere all in a lump." After some time, Dadabhai began to collect the volumes of Hansard, whether as a preliminary study for a parliamentary career one cannot say, but the following extract from a letter from Cama Brothers & Co. (June 1, 1883) is of special interest.

We have already purchased from Hansard complete volumes from the year 1844 to 1882. . . . For years before 1844 Messrs. King had a large number; these also we have secured for £40, so there are really now very few numbers wanting to make the whole complete. What we have secured comes to about £145 to £150.

Similarly, in India, the search for books, reports, returns and calendars was unending. For instance, the Madras University Calendar did not contain a complete list of undergraduates from the commencement of the University. Dadabhai applied to the Registrar of the University for it, but was told that there was no such list; he could compile it himself from the annual list given in each volume.

Between the years 1876 and 1878 Dadabhai carried on a prolonged correspondence with Sir Erskine Perry concerning the question of the Indian Civil Service. Although the Act of 1870 provided for the admission of a limited number of Indians to the Service by nominations, no rules were framed under the Act to give effect to the provisions. The authorities seemed determined to ignore all demands and overlook all assurances; but, thanks once more to Dadabhai's perseverance, the rules were framed in 1878.

With Sir David Wedderburn, William Wedderburn's brother, who was then a member of the House of Commons, Dadabhai took up the question of salaries and pensions of European employees in the different departments of the State. It was part of the larger issue of Indianization; and the particulars called for were essential to gauge the extent of the drain.

In H. M. Hyndman, the Socialist, Dadabhai found the most ardent student of Indian economics and a vehement critic of the British administration of India, one of the few men who, while in easy circumstances, took part in unpopular movements and stood for the oppressed against the strong. They were in constant consultation with each other ever since Dadabhai had begun to bring to the knowledge of the British public the poverty of India. How the acquaintance began is graphically described by Hyndman himself in his *Reminiscences*.<sup>1</sup>

I had finished my paper, and was about to send it off to the *Nineteenth Century*, feeling that I had not been able to put the statistical part of it as clearly and convincingly as it should have been put, when I strolled into Messrs Kings, the Parliamentary booksellers, then in King Street, which has since been pulled down. . . . As I left the shop, I noticed a booklet from which the cover had been torn, and the words "The Poverty of India" in heavy block letters on a white ground stared up at me. If the cover had remained, I certainly should not have noticed it. "What is that?" I asked. "Only a mass of figures," was the reply. I at once seized the little volume, and found that Mr. Dadabhai

<sup>1</sup> *The Record of an Adventurous Life*, p 175

Naoroji had therein placed at my disposal precisely the statistics about India which completed my own work. The article was published under the title Mr. Knowles chose for it, "The Bankruptcy of India," as the first paper in the *Nineteenth Century* for October 1878.

Hyndman's indents on Dadabhai for statistics, reports, and literature concerning Indian affairs were scarcely less formidable than those of Dadabhai himself on the Government departments and booksellers and publishers. He, too, had the drain on his mind as much as Dadabhai. Both felt convinced that the authorities in India were working up to a hideous catastrophe; both were keenly alive to the need for propaganda; both constantly contributed informing and inspiring articles on the dry topics of Indian administration to newspapers and periodicals and circulated pamphlets in thousands. Both were agreed that there should be a sustained clamour all over England and India; and Hyndman stirred up criticism even on the Continent. Dadabhai continued to keep him posted with current Indian news and was profusely thankful to his Socialist friend for all that he was doing for poor India. No less grateful was Hyndman to Dadabhai for the literature supplied to him, which, he said, was of the greatest service to him in working out the vast and indeed endless subject of India and Indian finance.

I was glad (he stated in his letter, October 17, 1878) that the correspondence with "C" (not Caird) in *The Times* gave me an opportunity of again publicly stating my obligations to your laborious calculations and gave me also an opportunity of stating what I also believe to be the fact that natives of India have no desire to change our rule for that of Russia, even if they could do so.

On February 21, 1880, Hyndman wrote:

For the moment we are in the back-water of Indian affairs, but I trust that Mr. Hunter's optimism will have no effect upon public opinion. His lectures have fallen very flat and shortly I hope to be able to answer them. The Government, I am assured,

mean to produce steadily a policy of economy. But in the first place this Afghan war must be paid for by England. I suggested the other day that on the appointment of a new Finance Minister a native should be appointed Assistant Finance Minister at a good salary to be deducted from the present salary. I have reason to hope this may be carried out. What a pity the *Statesman* here has become such a virulent party organ! It has quite spoilt itself for any good it might have done for India, and its knowledge has been thrown away.

In another letter (April 25), he said:

I trust the advent of the Liberals to power—though I hate and detest myself their pro-Russian policy—will benefit India and also bring you forward as a man who has done so much for your country. Now at any rate you will begin to reap your reward in actual reform.

Hyndman then threw out a very useful hint for Lal Mohan Ghose, one of India's greatest masters of satire, who had been deputed to England with monster petitions, for presentation to Parliament, in connexion with the Civil Service question.

If you see Mr. Lal Mohan Ghose, pray counsel him to let bygones be bygones. Englishmen will not be abused, however wrong they may be, except *by themselves*. He may do much good by pushing on reorganization.

On July 17 Hyndman wrote that he had been full of work on the subject of the drain.

I have had a private letter from Mr. Lee-Warner, a very nice one, complaining of the inaccuracy of "native statistics." I have asked him, when he is well, to call on you. I have told him, what I believe without flattering to be the truth, that he will find himself in the presence of one of the ablest brains in certain directions he could possibly meet with. That at any rate is my opinion. You are certainly never inaccurate, and India and all of us owe you much.

The correspondence was kept up during the absence of

Dadabhai in India. Before his departure, Dadabhai wrote (March 5, 1881):

I have now decided to return to Bombay in about two weeks. It is possible I may return soon. I take this opportunity of offering you my heartfelt thanks for the fight you have fought in the cause of poor India, and I have no doubt you will never relinquish the just cause till the object is accomplished. . . . Kind regards to Mrs. Hyndman and many thanks for her sympathy in the cause.

In reply, Hyndman said: "You may rely upon it, I will not give up India."

In a letter from Bombay, Dadabhai told Hyndman that he had found his pecuniary affairs worse than he expected. Yet in the same letter he announced his intention to print his correspondence with the India Office, rather an expensive item. In October he sent copies to Hyndman and asked him to have them distributed among members of the House of Commons. "It is almost decided by me," he added, "that I must settle down here. I shall occupy myself here in business or resume my Indian politics."

*Hyndman to Dadabhai*

9.12.1881. I sent you the first and second editions of my little work *England for All*, embracing ideas I put forward when last we met and applying them to the whole of the British Empire. . . . It has produced a good deal of sensation among the working classes, and the Democratic Federation, of which I am the head, is already a powerful organization. You will note that in the chapter on India I do not mince matters

2.8.1882. My opinion is the same as Sir Louis Mallet's. Nothing can be done for India until we have a revolution here. The upper and middle classes will not listen and do not care. I am therefore striving to bring about a Revolution by peaceful means, if possible, but at the critical moment I should not shrink from force, if we were strong enough. The mass of the people here are in a deplorable state and worse, I sometimes think, than your starving

ryots and famished labourers of Bombay and Madras—for they have at least the *Sun*. . . . The charge of the cost of the expedition to Egypt on the Indian revenues is, indeed, monstrous. Yet what are we reformers to do? Gladstone approves, Hartington proposes, the whole Liberal party support, and Fawcett has been bribed into silence. I can imagine nothing worse. Wilson's article in *Fraser* is good in *matter*, but his style is bad. It is furious without being forcible. Colonel Osborne's article in the *Fortnightly* is also valuable. But what can they do? These reviews go only to middle-class readers, and who can convince when the breeches-pocket is arguing the other way? However, we are slowly working on to a great upheaval here. When it comes, India will reap the benefit too. . . . Honestly, the cause of India, by itself, has *gone back* with the upper and middle classes during the last year or two. With the working class it has made progress. To them and them only you must look for justice.

*Dadabhai to Hyndman*

4.9.1882. If the labouring classes are moved, there is no doubt much good will be done. You have undertaken a very difficult task—a peaceful revolution—and I wish you heartily every success. Yes, this charge on India for the Egyptian contingent is very wrong. The Liberals seem to be eating their own words. The feeling of despair comes over me sometimes, but perseverance is absolutely necessary. For efforts in a right cause the result sometimes comes when least expected; continuous crying in magazines and papers is the agency of educating England in the great Indian question and every effort made is a step in the direction of the goal.

*Hyndman to Dadabhai*<sup>1</sup>

The work you and some of the Englishmen have done is beginning to bear fruit. But we must agitate, not merely lecture. All this fuss on the Continent of Europe and in Ireland helps on the cause of justice to the peoples. With the death of old Gladstone there will be a general break-up of parties and some of our people will come to the front here.

<sup>1</sup> Without date.

The most notable correspondence of this period was carried on with Lord Hartington, Secretary of State for India. When preparing his papers on the Poverty of India, Dadabhai had not had sufficient time to work out in detail the averages for all the items of production in different provinces of India, but with the Administration Report of the Punjab for 1876-77 in his hands, he worked out the averages of all the production tables given in the report. He asked the authorities that his tables might be referred to the Statistical Department of the India Office with instructions to point out errors, if any. The India Office expert, F. C. Danvers, pointed out what he considered were flaws in Dadabhai's calculations. Dadabhai was then very ill and under medical treatment; but within a month he was ready with a crushing rejoinder (September 13, 1880).

When an expert is set on an expert, the result almost invariably is confusion. Danvers called attention to the fact that Dadabhai's calculations had not taken straw into account. Dadabhai justified the omission not merely of straw but of grass, cotton seed, and other fodder or food for animals on the ground that it made no difference to the ultimate result. "Either the whole gross annual production of the country may be taken (including straw, grass, etc.)," he observed, "and from this *gross* production, before apportioning it per head of human population, a deduction should be made for the portion required for all the stock," or, as he had done, "all straw, grass, and every production raised for animal food should be left out of the calculation, and only the rest of the production which is and can be turned to human use should be apportioned among the human population."

When Hyndman saw this correspondence, he wrote (October 27):

I have read what you have written with great interest, especially rejoicing in your complete overthrow of that ass Danvers. I do really believe that ere long your noble labours must be crowned with success.

The India Office critic also took exception to the principle

adopted by Dadabhai of equally apportioning the value of agricultural produce and manufactures amongst the whole population without distinguishing how many were agriculturists, how many mechanics, and how many belonged to other trades or professions, or possessed property, and whose incomes, therefore, were not derived directly from agriculture or manufactures. "Thus he omits all reference," the critic pointed out, "to railway wealth, Government stock, house property, profits of trade, salaries, pensions, non-agricultural wages, professional incomes and returns to investments, and all other sources from which a man who does not grow food himself may obtain the means of purchasing it."

In a spirited reply Dadabhai endeavoured to demolish this argument. As regards railway wealth, he maintained that by the mere fact of the removal of wheat from the Punjab to Bombay not a single grain of wheat nor a single pie of money was added to what already existed in India before the wheat was touched. "If the mere movement of produce can add to the existing wealth," he observed facetiously, "India can become rich in no time; all it would have to do is to go on moving its produce continuously all over India, all the year round, and under the magic wheels of the train wealth will go on springing till the land will not suffice to hold it." Why, then, anyone should take the trouble to move the wheat at all, the doyen of Indian Economics did not pause to examine or explain.

As regards Government stock, however, Dadabhai was on firmer ground. His contention was that it did not "from itself produce or create or make to grow any money, food, or any kind of material wealth." Similarly, "the house does not grow or create the rent by the mere fact of my occupying it."

Not a single atom of money or wheat is added, he urged, to the existing wealth of the country by this internal trade; only a different distribution has taken place. . . . Official salaries and pensions are paid by Government from revenue, and this revenue is derived from the production of the country; and so from that same source are all such salaries and pensions derived. . . . The



mere act of my consulting professional gentlemen (e.g. doctors and lawyers) does not enable me to create money to pay them. . . . In short, every labourer—mental or physical—has his share for subsistence, through various channels, from the only one fountain-head—the annual material production of the country. There is no source outside the production (including any addition to it from profits of foreign trade) from which any individual derives his means of subsistence.

Thus was confusion worse confounded. One combatant could not distinguish between bulk and value; the other mistook individual wealth for national income. While the author of the thesis insisted on ignoring the fact that income consisted of utility and that services which had a utility value could not be left out of account in computing the national income, the official apologist discerned no difference between individual and national income. There was one redeeming feature, however, in Dadabhai's estimate. He had cautiously provided Rs. 33 crores under the heading "Contingencies." This provision atoned for the omission to evaluate services, and it is no little tribute to his skill that his estimate of the *per capita* income of Rs. 20 stood the test of all subsequent research in that field.

Soon afterwards, the Secretary of State was treated to a deeply interesting memorandum (November 16) from Dadabhai on the *moral* poverty of India. The burden of his song was that the same disastrous drain which was responsible for the material exhaustion of India was responsible for the moral loss to her of the experience and wisdom acquired by the members of the Services in the execution of their duties.

Europeans occupy almost all the higher places in every department of Government directly or indirectly under its control. While in India, they acquire India's money, experience, and wisdom; and when they go, they carry both away with them. Thus India is left without, and cannot have, those elders in wisdom and experience who, in every country, are the natural guides of the rising generations in their national and social con-

duct and of the destinies of their country, and a sad, sad loss this is! There may be very few social institutions started by Europeans in which Natives, however fit and desirous to join, are not deliberately and insultingly excluded. The Europeans are, and make themselves, strangers in every way.

Such a loss to India, maintained Dadabhai carried politically with it its own Nemesis.

He who runs may see that if the present material and moral destruction of India continues, a great convulsion must inevitably arise, by which either India will be more and more crushed under the iron heel of despotism and destruction or may succeed in shattering the destroying hand and power. Far, far is it from my earnest prayer and hope that such should be the result of the British rule. In this rule there is every element to produce immeasurable good, both to India and England, and no thinking Native of India would wish harm to it, with all the hopes that are yet built upon the righteousness and conscience of the British statesmen and nation.

Dadabhai then told the Secretary of State that he was the highest authority on whom the responsibility of governing India rested. He alone had the power, as a member of the British Cabinet, to guide the Parliament to acts "worthy of the English character, conscience, and nation." The glory or the disgrace of the British in India was in his hands. He had to make Parliament lay down how India should be governed "for India's good." After this followed, in prophetic strain, a warning that failure to give redress would drive the people to a boycott not merely of English wares but of English rule.

Dr. Birdwood has brought to the notice of the English public (he said) certain songs, now being spread among the people of Western India, against the destruction of Indian industry, and we may laugh at this as a futile attempt to shut out English machine-made cheaper goods against hand-made dearer ones. But little do we think what this movement is likely to grow into, and what new phases it may take in time. The songs are at present directed against English wares, but they are also a natural and

effective preparation against other English things when the time comes, if the English in their blindness allow such times to come. The songs are full of loyalty, and I have not the remotest doubt in the sincerity of that loyalty. But if the present downward course of India continues, if the mass of the people at last begin to despair of any amelioration, and if educated youths, without the wisdom and experience of the world, become their leaders, it will be but a *very, very* short step from loyalty to disloyalty, to turn the course of indignation from English wares to English rule. The songs will remain the same, one word of curse for the rule will supply the spark.

After this warning, the ardent admirer of the British people turned to the brighter side of the picture. True to their English nature and character, some Englishmen had turned the current of thought of the English people towards a better understanding of *England's duty to India*.

These Englishmen, as well as public writers like Fawcett, Hyndman, Perry, Caird, Knight, Bell, Wilson, Ward, and others (he pointed out) vindicate to India the English character, and show that when Englishmen as a body will *understand* their duty and responsibility, the Natives of India may fairly expect a conduct of which theirs is a sample—a desire, indeed, to act rightly by India. The example and earnestness of these Englishmen, though yet small their number, keep India's hope alive—that England will produce a statesman who will have the moral courage and firmness to face the Indian problem, and do what the world should expect from England's conscience, and from England's mission to humanity.

The rulers boasted, and justly, that they had introduced education and Western civilization into India but, on the other hand, they acted “as if no such thing had taken place.”

It is a strange self-condemnation that after half a century or more of such effort, they have not yet prepared a sufficient number of men fit for the service of their own country. . . . We are made B.A.s and M.A.s and M.D.s, with the strange result that we are not yet considered fit to teach our countrymen. In the

case of former conquests, the invaders either retired with their plunder and booty or became the rulers of the country. When they only plundered and went back, they made, no doubt, great wounds; but India, with her industry, revived and healed the wounds. When the invaders became the rulers of the country, they settled down in it, and whatever was the condition of their rule, according to the character of the sovereign of the day, there was at least no material or moral drain in the country. Whatever the country produced remained in the country, whatever wisdom and experience was acquired in her services remained among her own people. With the English, the case is peculiar. There are the great wounds of the first wars in the burden of the public debt, and those wounds are kept perpetually open and widening by draining away the lifeblood in a continuous stream. The former rulers were like butchers hacking here and there, but the English, with their scientific scalpel, cut to the very heart, and yet lo! there is no wound to be seen, and soon the plaster of the high talk of civilization, progress, and what not covers up the wound! The English rulers stand sentinel at the front door of India, challenging the whole world that they do and shall protect India against all comers, and themselves carry away by a back door the very treasures they stand sentinel to protect.

England's conduct in India was in strange contrast with her relations with other countries.

She sympathizes with and helps every nationality that struggles for a constitutional representative government. On the one hand, she is the parent of, and maintains, the highest constitutionalism, and, on the other, she exercises a clear and, though thoughtlessly, a despoiling despotism in India under a pseudo-constitutionalism in the shape of the farce of the present Legislative Council. Now I do not mean to say that India can suddenly have a full-blown Parliament, and of such widespread representation as England enjoys. But has England made any honest effort to gradually introduce a true representation of people, excepting some solitary exceptions of partial municipal representation? I need not dwell upon the present farce of the

nomination system for the Legislative Councils, and of the dummies that are sometimes nominated.

Then came a timely protest against the growing autocracy of the authorities in India.

After having a glorious history of heroic struggle for constitutional government, England is now rearing up a body of Englishmen in India, trained up and accustomed to despotism, with all the feelings of impatience, pride, and high-handedness of the despot becoming gradually ingrained in them, and with the additional training of the dissimulation of constitutionalism. Is it possible that such habits and training of despotism, with which Indian officials return from India, should not, in the course of time, influence the English character and institutions? The English in India, instead of raising India, are themselves descending and degenerating to the lower level of Asiatic despotism. Is this a Nemesis that will, in fullness of time, show to them what fruit their conduct in India produced?

As an illustration of the demoralization of the rulers Dadabhai mentioned the opium trade.

What a spectacle to the world! In England no statesman dares to propose that opium may be allowed to be sold in public-houses at the corner of every street in the same way as beer or spirits. On the contrary, Parliament distinctly enacts opium and all preparations of opium or poppies as poison to be sold by certified chemists only. . . . And yet at the other end of the world this Christian, highly civilized, and humane England forces a "heathen" and "barbarous" power to take this poison and tempts a vast human race to use it, and to degenerate and demoralize themselves with this "poison"! And why? Because India cannot fill up the remorseless drain. . . . The opium trade is a sin on England's head and a curse on India for her share in being the instrument.

This was but a prelude to the regular crusade carried on in England against the nefarious trade in which he was to take part soon afterwards as an active combatant.

The relationship between the Paramount Power and the Princes of India, which Dadabhai regarded as 'un-English and iniquitous,' was the last important question raised by Dadabhai.

Fancy a people, the greatest champions of fair-play and justice, having a system of political agency by which, as the Princes say, they are stabbed in the dark, the Political Agents making secret reports, and the Government often acting thereon without a fair inquiry or explanation from the Princes

If Britain's policy was bad, that of the previous conquerors had been worse. That, however, was no excuse for the inequities complained of. "If the British do not show themselves to be vastly superior in proportion to their superior enlightenment and civilization," urged Dadabhai, "if India does not prosper and progress under them, there will be no justification for their existence in India."

In a further memorandum (January 4, 1881), Dadabhai exposed the fallacies underlying some of the statements and recommendations of the report of the Indian Famine Commission, which had just been published. The Commission's treatment of the question of the incidence of taxation provoked some satirical remarks against people who coolly stated that India was lightly taxed, in comparison with England, for the security she enjoyed. "In the case of one, it was not even a flea-bite; in the case of the other, it meant starvation and death of millions."

There is security of life and property in one sense or way—i.e. the people are secure from any violence from each other or from Native despots. But from England's own grasp there is no security of property at all and, as a consequence, no security for life. What is secure, and well secure, is that England is perfectly safe and secure, and does so with perfect security, to carry away from India, and to eat up in India, her property at the present rate of some £30,000,000 or £40,000,000 a year. The reality, therefore, is that the policy of English rule, as it is (not as it can and should be), is an everlasting, unceasing, and everyday increasing foreign invasion, utterly, though gradually, destroying the country. . . . "More Europeans, more Europeans," is the

eternal cry; and this very Report itself of the Commission is not free from it. The Commission suggest the institution of an Agricultural Department, and a very important suggestion it is. But they forget that it is *for India* this is required, that it is at India's expense it has to be done, that it is from India's wretched income that this expenditure has to be provided. . . . that native agency, under a good English head or two, would be the most natural and proper agency for the purpose. Prostrate as India is . . . they can only say, "More Europeans," as if no such thing as a people existed in India. Were any Englishmen to make such a proposal for England, that French or German youths be instructed at England's expense, and that such youths make up the different public departments, he would be at once scouted. And yet these Commissioners seriously recommend to aggravate the very evil for which they were expected to suggest a remedy.

Then came words of anguish explaining why he was obliged to harp perpetually on that painful topic.

It is no pleasure to me to dwell incessantly on the wretched, heart-rending, blood-boiling condition of India; none will rejoice more than myself if my views are proved to be mistaken. The sum-total of all is, that without any such intension or wish, and with every desire for the good of India, England has in reality been the most disastrous and destructive foreign invader of India. . . . This unfortunate fact is to be boldly faced by England; . . . I am writing to English *gentlemen*, and I have no fear but that they will receive my sincere utterances with the generosity and love of justice of English gentlemen.

The hopes for redress "at England's hands and conscience" were, however, doomed to disappointment. Year in and year out, Dadabhai addressed numerous audiences on that perennial theme. Before Committees and Commissions, before the House of Commons itself, he pleaded vehemently and continuously for twenty-five years for redress, but all to no purpose. Instead of a change for the better, he witnessed year after year a change for the worse in the attitude of the bureaucracy. They refused to believe that their lordly administration was impoverishing India

and piling on her load over load of debt. Worse still, the bureaucrats in office were getting intolerant of the criticisms and warnings of loyal Indians such as Dadabhai. During the twenty-five years of which we speak, considerable changes and developments had taken place in the condition of the people and in the system of government. For instance, in respect of recruitment to the Services and representation in the Legislative Councils, there was a distinct improvement; but in Dadabhai's opinion it was grossly inadequate. He decided to make another effort to bring to the notice of the world the misery of his hunger-stricken country and the evils of political subjection by publishing all his scattered papers and pamphlets, correspondence with State officials, evidence before Committees and Commissions, speeches and addresses on the subject, together with extracts from old State Papers, Statutes, and Proclamations.

The result was a somewhat chaotic compilation—a bulky book in a red cover containing nearly 700 pages of statements and speeches extending over a period of nearly thirty years, entitled *Poverty and un-British Rule in India*. Had Dadabhai brought his facts and statistics up to date, taking cognizance of the changes that had taken place since he commenced his examination of the material condition of India, had he revised and condensed the mass of material, the book would certainly have been more inviting, the picture presented by him more life-like and the indictment of the governing class more rational and no less worthy of attention. As it was, it suffered from the drawbacks of a collection of writings and utterances of different periods—wearisome repetition, tedious overlapping, and lack of coherence. Despite these defects, however, the book was widely read in India and in England.

The title of the book reflected the change that had taken place in the sentiments of the author during that long interval. Constant disappointment had embittered his feelings. This most moderate among Indian publicists appeared to have been driven at last to resort to language marked by bitterness born of continued injustice. Not only were the ideals of British rule being steadily



lowered but, it seemed to him, also the best traditions of British character were being wantonly tarnished. Opening with quotations from the Acts of Parliament and Royal Proclamations from 1833 to 1877, and taking those texts as his starting-point, he proceeded to demonstrate the truth of the statement made by Lord Lytton, who wrote in a confidential minute on the Act of 1833, that "both the Government of England and India" had taken "every means in their power of breaking to the heart the words of promise they had uttered to the ear."

Numerous quotations from speeches and writings of other eminent statesmen and public men followed, containing repeated warnings to the British Government of the disastrous consequences of denying to the educated classes in India participation in government. It was clear to anyone who might read the opening pages that the England that Dadabhai adored was the country renowned as the champion of liberty and justice, the country whose ideals of civilization were nobly expressed in the Proclamation of 1858, and that the England he stigmatized was the country that insisted on ruling India as a conqueror instead of as a trustee, the country that had reduced India to abject poverty and loaded her with a burden of debt too heavy for her to bear, the country that had drained away and was draining away her wealth to an extent which seemed excessive, even after due allowance was made for the tribute inseparable from foreign domination.

There were two sides of the book—the economic and the political. It was, in fact, an approach to politics through the door of economics. On the economic side were treated the topics of production and distribution, taxation, railways, foreign trade, prices, wages, currency and exchange, public debt and income, and the drain. In spite of the somewhat imperfect presentation of the various issues, the book threw a new light on the questions discussed, and it is read and referred to even to this day by students of Indian economics. On the political side it dealt with such subjects as the goal of British policy in India, the admission of Indians to higher grades of the civil and military services, the relations of the Secretary of State for India and of the British

Parliament with India, the question of representation of Indians in the Indian Legislature, the Indian States, and the possibility of a Russian invasion. On these issues Dadabhai had to say many unpleasant things. He was so overcome by a sense of repeated injustice that his usual sense of scrupulous fairness appeared to have been somewhat dimmed. The book was certainly not free from exaggerations such as the statement that "the lot of the unhappy Indian natives was somewhat worse than that of the slaves of America," or that it was the constant drain to which should be attributed "her famines and plagues, destruction and impoverishment." On the whole, however, it was clear that while on the one hand the author found the policy of the rulers "un-British and suicidal," on the other hand he was convinced that if true British rule were substituted for the pseudo-British system of government, which he deplored, the result would be "a blessing to India and a glory to England, a result worthy of the foremost and most humane nation on the face of the earth."

## CHAPTER XVII

# INAUGURATION OF A NEW ERA

**B**Y the end of the year 1881 Dadabhai's firm in London was closed. It did not, however, mean final break with business. It was arranged that he could carry on from Bombay the same business through the firm of the Camas. Returning, then, to his motherland, he found that the political atmosphere was more favourable than before. Lord Ripon had succeeded Lord Lytton as the Viceroy of India. With his advent there was a change for the better in the administration of the country and in the spirit of the people.

In 1882 an Education Commission was appointed. Dadabhai submitted a statement of his views to the Commission. In it he marshalled statistics revealing the "sad, sad tale" about India. "Wretched as she was materially, still more wretched was she educationally." What was the cause of "this strange educational wretchedness of India?" In answering this question, he observed: "We come back again, as in every such question of India's wants, to its material and moral poverty."

As regards remedy, he welcomed the two Resolutions of Lord Ripon's Government—one tending to the principle of spending the country's revenue with the voice of the people, and the other leading to the goal of saving to the people the produce of their labour. The first laid down that "the people should be taught and left to self-government"; the second ordered that stores should be purchased of local manufacturers.

Let the Viceroy go one step further, urged Dadabhai, and enact, either in Parliament or in India, that like the dead stores the living stores also—all the services—should be supplied locally from the manufactures of the Educational Institutions of the country, excepting, of course, the small supervising, guiding, and

controlling highest power and agency. . . . It is sometimes alleged that Native Professors and other high educational officers will not be respected by the Natives and Europeans. It is a libel upon human nature to suppose that natives would not feel a pride in the elevation of their own countrymen, or cannot respect real worth and merit. . . . In fact respect and esteem depend upon the real worth of the person, be he Native or European.

By this time Dadabhai's fame as an authority on Indian problems had spread far and wide. Many Englishmen, although strangers to him, sought his advice on various matters. When he had broken down in health and was paying to nature the penalty for overwork, namely, enforced rest at Tithal, he received a letter from Mr. (afterwards Sir) Thomas Firth (Dec. 26, 1883), stating that at the meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce of Great Britain and Ireland for February 1884 he wished to propose a resolution for the promotion of British trade with India by developing the agricultural resources of the country through the more vigorous construction of railways, the establishment of local banks, and the application of British capital to public works. "This, I presume," said he, "will be an interesting subject to you, and on which I should be glad to have the expression of your views, especially in its relation to the advancement of the material interests of the people of India." After referring the writer to his papers on the condition of India, Dadabhai observed:

The means you propose for "the promotion of British trade with India" are good for every country, and would be more particularly so for India, but for our circumstances. . . . The evil that is eating at the root of India's prosperity is the employment of foreigners in all the Indian Services. . . . This evil drains from India at the lowest calculation some £20,000,000 per annum, and as long as this drain continues, India, in my humble opinion, has no hope for progress.

In January 1883 Dadabhai was appointed a Justice of the Peace. It might have been a coincidence, but the event was

signalized by the publication of a monthly journal, *The Voice of India*, with the object of securing a fair hearing and justice for India. His prolonged residence in England had convinced him that there were in that country large classes of people willing and anxious to do justice to India. They found it very difficult, however, to understand the problems vitally affecting the country. Experts often contradicted one another; and the people of India were practically voiceless. Dadabhai, no doubt, was himself the Voice of India, but he recognized the need for reinforcing that voice by that of others also. To give the British public a clear idea of the feelings and wishes of the Indian people as a whole, he arranged to publish monthly in Bombay a magazine somewhat similar to *Public Opinion* in England. It provided a compendium of all that was valuable in the Indian journals on the leading topics of the day. It was not intended to advocate views of its own, but merely to reflect the opinions set forth in the Indian Press and to serve as an interpreter between the subjects and the rulers. The prospectus pointed out that it was a "policy of prudence no less than of justice" to give the grievances of the people "a fair constitutional hearing," and that those attached to the British rule could do no better service than supply to the rulers accurate information as to the customs, feelings, and even the prejudices of the people. It was hoped that Members of Parliament, journalists, and authors desirous of studying Indian questions would welcome such a journal; it was, therefore, arranged to spread its circulation to clubs, reading-rooms, libraries, and other similar institutions throughout England. It was a splendid self-sacrificing effort to promote a "sustained and intelligent interest in the welfare of our Indian Empire."

The first issue of the *Voice of India* saw the light on February 1. Dadabhai financed it for some years and B. M. Malabari managed and conducted it during his absence from India. From January 1, 1890, it was incorporated, for financial reasons, with the *Indian Spectator*, Malabari's famous weekly, which filled an important place in Indian journalism until his death in 1912.

Of all the Viceroys of India, Lord Ripon was unquestionably the most popular. His abounding affection for the people of India, his earnest desire to broaden the basis of their liberty, and his transparent sincerity earned for him the title "Ripon the Righteous." A public meeting was held under the auspices of the Bombay Branch of the East India Association, on February 17, 1883, to memorialize the Queen-Empress for an extension of the term of his office so as to enable him to complete the work of reform in various departments of Government inaugurated during his administration. Dadabhai was the promoter of this meeting. What Lord Ripon was as a man, he said, was reflected in one of his speeches in which he had told his audience that his ambition was to rule India not as a ruler but as a friend. The Viceroy was prepared for all sorts of failures. He believed that it would be a folly to pull up a plant every time in order to see how deep the roots had gone, as that would be the surest way of destroying the plant. He was determined that his schemes of local self-government should not suffer from any negligence of officials, and he had impressed on their minds that experience alone was the best school in which they could learn political or moral wisdom. Lord Ripon, added Dadabhai, was destined not only to be their saviour but also the greatest "patriot of England."

Soon afterwards another public meeting was held in Bombay (April 24, 1883) to support the Ilbert Bill, which had convulsed the European community in India. It is unnecessary at this distant date to rake up the embers of a controversy that is dead and forgotten. For the purpose of our narrative only a brief statement as regards the object of that meeting should suffice. Under the criminal law of the land, as it stood in 1882, no Indian magistrate, however high his position, could inquire into any charge against a European British subject, whereas it was competent to his own subordinate, if he were a European, to do so. The object of the Bill was to remove this anomaly and to establish an equality before the law of all classes of the people. The introduction of the new measure provoked an outburst of racial passion and virulent agitation on the part of the European community, never before

witnessed in the history of India. The proclamations of the Crown laid down that there was to be no governing caste in India, but in practice preferential treatment in respect of service, trade, industry, and even justice, had come to be regarded as the divine right of the governing race. The Bill was regarded by the Europeans resident in India as an audacious encroachment on that prerogative. The Viceroy was abused and vilified by them more than any apathetic or autocratic satrap had ever been denounced and defamed by Indians. In Calcutta they held a protest meeting in the Town Hall. A confederacy of blusters had been formed, who, it was reported, bound themselves "to overpower the sentries at Government House, to put the Viceroy on board a steamer at Chandpal Ghat, and to deport him to England!" A good lesson taught to budding Indian politicians in the art of agitation on constitutional and non-violent lines! A good reminder, too, to arch-agitators that there was yet need for a more vigorous and India-wide agitation to combat the reactionary forces that were at work in the country. The Bombay meeting had been organized as a counterblast to the assaults on the magnanimous Viceroy and his colleagues, who had shown great forbearance under serious provocation. Of this meeting, too, the moving spirit was Dadabhai.

A public meeting was also held in London at Willis's Rooms, St. James's (August 1), in support of Ripon's "Native Policy." John Bright presided. In a spirited address he told his countrymen: "India is not committed to our control to be held as a field for English ambition and for English greed."

Sir Evelyn Baring (afterwards Lord Cromer), the Finance Minister of the day, had also shown sympathy towards the people of India. On his retirement from office (August 1884) to embark on his monumental work in Egypt, a movement was set on foot by the inhabitants of Bombay, Indian and European, to mark their appreciation of his services and to give expression to their feelings of admiration and gratitude for his solicitude for the welfare of the people. An address was accordingly presented to him at his residence in Bombay; Dadabhai was one of

the members of the Deputation who called on him on that occasion.

A year later, Lord Ripon laid down the reins of office. He had striven earnestly, despite opposition from within his Cabinet and from without, to remove some of the anomalies and inequities against which Dadabhai had raised his voice for more than thirty years. He had striven to translate into action much that had been confined to mere declaration and had thereby revived the faith of the Indian people in British justice. He had, moreover, endeavoured to spread education among the masses, to improve their economic condition, to protect the country from attempts to saddle it with expenditure incurred outside India, to place Indians on a footing of equality with their British fellow-subjects, to improve the intellectual advancement of the people generally, and to train them in the art of local self-government. It was Dadabhai's earnest wish that so noble a Viceroy should have a royal send-off and that the public should raise a permanent memorial to mark their appreciation of the righteous spirit that had inspired all the measures inaugurated during his regime. Such, indeed, was also the wish of the population, as indicated by the demonstrations of an unparalleled character which marked the public meeting held at the Town Hall in Bombay, on November 29, 1884.

It fell to the lot of Dadabhai to support the principal resolution appreciating the eminent services rendered by Lord Ripon.

The greatest questions of the Indian problem to my mind at present (said he) are our material and moral loss and our political education for self-government. For the former, the first great achievement of the Ripon Government is a courageous and candid acknowledgment that the material and educational condition of India is that of extreme poverty. After this bold and righteous recognition, England will feel bound to remedy this great evil. Lord Ripon's Government has, however, not remained satisfied with this acknowledgment, but has laid the foundation of the remedy by resolving that Indian energy, Indian resources, and Indian agency must be developed in every way and in all depart-



ments with broad and equal justice to all. For the second—our political education—nothing can be a more conclusive proof of the success of his measures in that direction than the sight of the great and national political upheaval in the ovation that is now being poured upon him throughout the length and breadth of India. And we ourselves are here today as the proof of the success of our political education.

They were to propose a memorial to Lord Ripon. What would a hundred such memorials be before the great "monument he had raised to himself"? As self-government and self-administration and education advanced, for which he has raised great new landmarks, his memory shall exist at every moment of India's life, and our memorials will sink into utter insignificance.

By far the best service rendered by Lord Ripon was to England and Englishmen. He had raised the name and glory of England and Englishmen, and confirmed India's loyalty to the British rule.

Deep and unshakable as my faith is in the English character for fairness and desire to do good to India (said Dadabhai, overcome by emotion), I must confess during my humble efforts in Indian politics I was sometimes driven to despair, and to doubt my faith. But Ripon has completely restored it to its full intensity, that England's conscience is right and England *will* do her duty and perform her great mission in India, when she has such sons, so pure of heart and high in statesmanship.

Dadabhai then announced princely donations from Indian Chiefs, mostly from Kathiawar, almost all secured by his effort. There were also present at the meeting deputations from Sholapur, Khandesh, and other parts of Western India to give the movement a thoroughly representative character.

Dadabhai's labours did not end with that meeting. He presided over another held, under the auspices of the *Arya Dnyanwardhak Sabha*, on December 22, at the Halai Bhattya Mahajan Wadi, Bombay, and worked zealously for the collection of funds for the proposed memorial. The correspondence for the year 1885 includes numerous appeals made to individuals and officials of Indian States, all in his own handwriting, for liberal donations.

To quote one instance: nothing was received, for some time, from one of the Princes; Dadabhai took up the matter with his Private Secretary. After an exchange of several letters, a communication was received from the Private Secretary (April 6, 1885), stating that His Highness considered it an honour for anyone to take part in the movement for the memorial fund and that he had great pleasure in sending a cheque for Rs. 2,000 as his contribution. Dadabhai was disappointed; he had expected Rs. 10,000; he thought it would be derogatory to the name and reputation of that Prince to announce a smaller sum as his donation. He asked a personal friend of His Highness what he thought of the matter. Promptly came the reply:

My personal regard for the Maharaja's reputation is so great that I beg of you not to accept the sum. On my return (from Mahableshwar) in June next, I will wait on H.H., and I venture to hope that I shall succeed in inducing him to do justice to himself. We as his friends cannot and will not publish his present subscription of which he is sure to repent hereafter.

Restless in every good cause, Dadabhai could not bear the idea of two months' suspension of activities. He suggested to the friend that if he could not go to the capital of the Prince, he might write to him; but the friend bided his time. At last, on June 10, Dadabhai received the message that His Highness had been pleased to subscribe a further sum of Rs. 8,500. The patience of exchanging nearly twenty letters in this single case was thus rewarded.

Hormusji Wadya, who was practising as a barrister in Kathiawar, after his association with Dadabhai in Baroda, was of great help in approaching the Princes for subscriptions to the Ripon Memorial. After describing what he had been able to achieve in that connexion, Wadya added (November 15, 1884):

I am so glad to see you joining your friends and responding socially to their advances. I am sure you will do the young generation greater good by your being more with them, and I do think it will do your health good by giving you the necessary

relaxation. You will think it a liberty that I should tell you this, but I can claim the privilege, I hope, of saying so to you. I have heard many regrets for your seclusion, and sincere ones, too. I have always shared the regret, for I am sure you were impairing your health by being too secluded.

Next to Lord Ripon, Dadabhai would have liked to see men like William Wedderburn and George Birdwood associated with the government of India. When he was convalescing at Tithal in April 1884, he heard reports that Birdwood's friends were trying to get him appointed Governor of Bombay or of any other Presidency. At once he wrote to Kabraji, editor of the *Rast Goftar* (April 15):

I think we might say a discreet word to help towards it. . . . Giving such and other qualifications you may instance names like Sir G. B. and Sir W. Wedderburn as examples, showing what amount of good such persons do by the influence they acquire over natives by their true and earnest sympathies with their wants and feelings.

After having complied with the suggestion, Kabraji wrote (April 22):

Your conditions were so stringent that I found it very difficult to pen the article in conformity with your instructions. I was not to say that Sir G. was a candidate nor that his friends were agitating. I was not to make the remotest allusion to the immediate motive of the article and yet I was to recommend Sir G. for the post which will only be vacated this time next year . . . I hope you are quite healthy and strong. Our cause and political affairs are without you a mere blank.

Dadabhai was then still poorly. He wrote in reply:

I have somewhat improved in my health, but I have not yet regained a proper tone for my mind. My sleep is not yet such as I should have as the test of the required improvement.

Ready as he was to throw himself heart and soul into movements for honouring those who had befriended him, Dadabhai

was equally prompt in repudiating the claims to public recognition of those who had done little to deserve it. In February 1885 he received a letter from Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, inviting him to a private meeting to consider the question of means publicly to appreciate the administration of Sir James Fergusson, Governor of Bombay, and expressing the hope that he could count upon Dadabhai's co-operation and assistance. Dadabhai forthwith replied that he was not prepared to join in a public expression of general approval.

Some other activities of this period may now be briefly mentioned.

It was Dadabhai's pride that, having the Dordi blood in his veins, he was a hard nut to crack. But tenacity of purpose was not the monopoly of the Dordis. All the Parsi priests of Navsari prided themselves on being stubborn to the core; and their rivals, the *mobeds* of Udwada, claimed to be made of yet sterner stuff. There was a dispute between the two groups of Parsi priests over their respective rights in certain ceremonies for consecrating a tower of silence at Khergaum, one of the villages near Bulsar. It was a very difficult matter for the Court at Bulsar to decide. With the consent of both the contending parties, the matter was referred to the arbitration of Dadabhai. It was a tribute to his sense of fairness and impartiality that the Udwada prelates accepted him as the sole arbitrator, even though he was the toughest of tough *Noshakras* (members of a Navsari priestly family). He decided in favour of the Navsari priests, but none questioned his *bona fides*.

Municipal duties also engaged Dadabhai's attention during this period. At the general municipal elections, held early in 1883, he was elected a member of the Corporation. His application to civic work until the year 1886 when he left for England was as remarkable as it was before. The old controversy about the Vehar debt was revived by him, but he had yet to go on hammering at it in England. The amendment of the Bombay Municipal Act was then on the tapis, and Dadabhai's contribution

to the work of the special Committee appointed by the Corporation to consider the question was also memorable.

One of the first fruits of the awakening caused by the Ilbert Bill agitation was the Bombay Presidency Association. The old Bombay Association, founded in the year 1852, had ceased to function. Even the Bombay Branch of the East India Association had outlived its utility. In the absence of Dadabhai the East India Association had deteriorated; it lacked not only its former vigour but also the warmth of its feeling for India. In the circumstances the Bombay Branch, being subordinate to the parent organization, could scarcely be expected to fight India's battles as before. During Lord Ripon's sympathetic regime, however, there had been a great awakening; Indian opinion had been stirred to its depth and it had acquired a weight and power rarely accorded to it before. The leaders of the Indian community decided to organize the opinion of all the sections of the population and to concentrate it on questions of vital issue by establishing another virile political association. A public meeting of the inhabitants of Bombay was held on January 31, 1885, at the Framji Cowasji Institute, where the Bombay Presidency Association was formally inaugurated. Dadabhai was elected to be one of the Vice-Presidents. "I look forward to the day," said Pherozeshah Mehta, "when the younger generations would produce men like Dadabhai Naoroji."

In August 1885 an invitation came to Dadabhai from Lord Reay, Governor of Bombay, to join the Bombay Legislative Council as an additional member. "He is sure," said the Private Secretary, "that both Government and the public would derive much benefit from the advice and assistance which your ability and experience would enable you to render." Dadabhai accepted the office. It is rarely that a fearless critic of the administration is invited to the Council table of the Governor; Lord Reay, however, had promised to make his Legislative Council as representative as possible, and he fulfilled the promise by the

selection of men like Dadabhai and Ranade. When the question of having an Indian member in the India Council was first raised, Dadabhai was considered to be the fittest to represent the Indian people in that Council. So esteemed a leader of the people should have been nominated to the Legislative Council of Bombay long ago, but the previous satraps were not Reays who would respect the man who spoke the truth, no matter how galling

The Premier of England having decided to appeal to the country against the House of Commons concerning the question of Home Rule for Ireland, a general election was imminent. Taking advantage of this situation, the Bombay Presidency Association decided to send a delegation to England to bring the wants of India to the knowledge of the British people and to appeal to them to support candidates who had made the cause of India their own. At a meeting of the Association, held in September 1885, a proposition was moved by Dadabhai declaring that the candidates who were deserving the support of the Indian people on account of their services and their publicly expressed opinions, were The Marquis of Hartington, Sir J. B. Phear, Captain Verney and Messrs. John Bright, J. Slagg, Lal Mohun Ghose, William Digby, W. S. Blunt, S. Keay, S. Laing, and W. C. Plowden.

There were other candidates who, having acquired a little local knowledge and imbibed a good deal of Anglo-Indian prejudice, were posing as authorities on Indian subjects. Dadabhai's motion, therefore, incorporated a clause repudiating the claims of those candidates, namely, Sir Richard Temple, J. M. Maclean, Sir Lewis Pelly, A. S. Ayrton, and Sir Roper Lethbridge, to speak on behalf of the people of India. It was an irony of fate that not one of the candidates commended by the Association was elected, whilst some of those repudiated were returned. The delegates sent by the Association to England, Narayan Chandavarkar, Munmohun Ghose and Ramaswamy Mudaliyar, were, however, successful in securing a hearing from thousands who listened sympathetically to their speeches concerning Indian affairs.

How and when precisely the impulse came to Dadabhai to try his luck at electioneering is not known, but it is highly probable that the success of the Indian Delegation and the forecasts of a dissolution of the House of Commons had something to do with it. As early as September 1885 the *Indian Mirror* welcomed the news that Dadabhai contemplated contesting the General Election. Until March, 1886, however, very little was heard of the stirring of Dadabhai's mind in this matter. In the meanwhile, it fell to his lot to be actively associated with the inauguration of two important organizations. One was the Bombay Ratepayers Association, established at a public meeting held under his presidency, five days before his departure for England, to ventilate and obtain redress for the civic grievances of the people. The other, by far the most important with which his name has been honourably associated, was the Indian National Congress.

So much has been said and written about the history of the Congress and its founders that it would be superfluous to go into the origin of the movement. Dadabhai was one of the moving spirits. Of the founders the most conspicuous was A. O. Hume, a retired member of the Indian Civil Service but an ardent and active supporter of India's struggle for freedom. At the first Congress, which held its sittings in Bombay in December 1885, Dadabhai took an active part. In almost all the resolutions adopted at that session one could easily discern his hand, particularly in the very first proposition, which approved of the promised committee of inquiry into the working of the Indian administration. One of the resolutions, praying for simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Service, was moved by him.

## CHAPTER XVIII

# IN SEARCH OF A CONSTITUENCY

ON March 13, 1886, the *Hindu* of Madras (then a tri-weekly) announced that Dadabhai intended to leave Bombay for England with a view to standing "as a candidate for election to Parliament on behalf of some constituency." As an authority on Indian economics, the paper observed, there was none equal to him in all India. It hoped Dadabhai would find a constituency ready to accept him as a candidate. The Calcutta papers were equally enthusiastic.

It seems Dadabhai had been in communication with his friends in England for some time to ascertain whether any constituency would be willing to accept him as a candidate. Martin Wood, who had been editor of *The Times of India*, was one of them. He wrote (December 12, 1884):

As to your candidature some time next spring, I think the way will open by that time if your strength can only be husbanded. We must, meantime, recall your personality to some of the men who knew you so well when you were in England before, but who may be forgetting now; L. M. G. (Lal Mohun Ghose) is going ahead.

In another letter Wood stated that he could count upon John Bright's assistance, although it was not always easy to get access to him. Then he gave Dadabhai a useful hint (May 1, 1885):

There is an incident that might well satisfy your resolve to be well supported before coming to England. I see it is stated that Lal Mohun Ghose has declined to stand for Woolwich; and this after addressing enthusiastic audiences and being unanimously accepted.

It was, however, so far, a mere phantasm. Dadabhai was in no way sanguine of finding a constituency; he feared he might have to abandon the idea altogether; hence the secrecy. Even if he



failed to get into Parliament, there would be much scope, thought Dadabhai, for solid work to be done in England on behalf of India. He could, with the help of sympathetic friends, take up with the authorities in England several outstanding questions affecting the welfare and advancement of India, and if he succeeded, his visit to the land of the rulers would not be unfruitful.

On the evening of his departure Dadabhai was entertained at dinner at the Ripon Club. Even then he said not a word on the subject of election. However, from the journal kept by him for the next three months, the only one that has come to hand, it appears that he had already done a good deal of spade work while he was in Bombay, and had taken several letters of introduction to persons who could assist him in the matter. These notes also throw a side-light on various matters and indicate what efforts he made in the midst of electioneering work to bring to the notice of English statesmen the wants and wrongs of India, not forgetting the grievance of the Bombay Municipality in regard to its water works loans.

*April 14.* Went to the India Office. Saw Mr. Pedder. He received me very kindly. I gave him a copy of the (Bombay Corporation) Memorial to the Secretary of State for India (*re* Vehar Water Works Debt) and expressed a hope that he would help in the matter as he knew all about it.<sup>1</sup> He said he would have something to say and that he thought the best plan would be to refer the question to the arbitration of some competent person. I then told him about the Tansa Loan. He said some of the Council were much against it, but that he would introduce me to Mr. Waterfield, with whom I might take up the subject. He then asked if I would like to be introduced to Mr. Godley (the Under-Secretary, afterwards Lord Kilbracken), I said that I had a letter to him from Lord Reay. Mr. Pedder took me to Mr. Godley, but wanted to introduce me first to Mr. Wodehouse, Lord Kimberley's son and Private Secretary. . . .

Sir George Birdwood asked me about the object of the

<sup>1</sup> W. G. Pedder, of the Indian Civil Service, was Municipal Commissioner for the City of Bombay between the years 1872 and 1876. He was Secretary, Department of Revenue and Statistics and Commerce, India Office, from 1879 to 1888.

present visit to England. I told him all. On the question of candidature for Parliament, he thought there were many difficulties. I should take up one side or the other; I should be locally known for some time, and I should have created some local interest in myself. . . . Nowadays the whole matter was a Party affair. Never in Parliament now is a question decided on merits, but from and for Party purposes. He spoke very strongly against Mr. Gladstone's Bill, but he said it would be decided on Party considerations only.

Sir G. then asked me what I thought of Mr. Malabari. I said he was a very good man. Sir G. said he had disliked Mr. Malabari very much from the time he had read his *Gujarat*.<sup>1</sup> It was bad to hold people up to ridicule and try to exaggerate their weak points. The duties of writers were sacred and responsible. They should try to bring out as much as possible what is good in a people and treat their weakness with a charitable and kind heart, endeavouring to elevate them and encourage them instead of discouraging them. . . . He said a good deal more in this way, and said he was glad to hear from me that Mr. Malabari was a good man and asked me whether he might write to him, telling him his mind. I told him to do so by all means and that he might say I wished him to do so. I told him that it was true that there was a little failing in Mr. Malabari that he treated weaknesses with a harsh or unsympathizing hand, but that even in that respect he was now much changed and that I was hoping that in his new edition he was correcting a good deal of his ideas of youthful days. Sir G. promised that he would write.

Mr. Pedder and I then went to Mr. Godley. Mr. Pedder introduced the subject of Velar Debt interest. I explained to Mr. Godley at some length the merits of the question and promised to give him a copy of the memorial to the Secretary of State as soon as baggage from Gibraltar came round. I then spoke to him about the Tansa Loan. He said some members of the Council were very shy of it. However, I am to see him again.

April 15. Called at Dr. R. Congreve's<sup>2</sup>. . . . He thought the connexion between England and India should be severed; it was injuring England, it was doing harm to the whole English

<sup>1</sup> Refers to *Gujarat and the Gujaratis*

<sup>2</sup> Richard Congreve, Positivist, and political and historical writer.

character. The connexion with the Colonies was a weakness. I was of a different opinion that the connexion should continue for the sake of India and that if certain reforms, which were sorely needed by India, were made, the connexion would be a blessing to both. I stated about Poverty and the remedy of the substitution of Native agency. This, he said, was just the thing which the statesmen would not dare to do. The English agency in India is an immediate benefit and they would not give it up. . . . A separation must come in time when the people generally are sufficiently advanced for self-government and political knowledge. Statesmen like Salisbury and Hartington were, he said, afraid of this very thing, that Ireland being separated, India would come next for something similar, and this they consider the destruction of the Empire. We have not now to depend so much upon statesmen in Parliament. They only register the wishes of the people. They can do nothing. Statesmen like Salisbury and Hartington oppose this Irish Bill so vehemently, but Mr. Gladstone depends upon the support of the mass of the people. The days for the monarchy first, then for the aristocracy, are now gone. . . . Dr. C. did not wish Indians to be in Parliament. For India's sake getting into Parliament will not do much good. The object would be better attained by working outside. The peculiar ways and complications of the ways of Parliament leave no scope to work in it. Once in, you do not know where you are, or what you can do, and have little chance.

Dr. C. was sorry Sir W. Wedderburn was not coming. When I told him that I could not express to him how highly we esteemed Sir W. W. and Mr. Hume, who had so completely identified themselves with the Native cause, that I did not know whether we should ever be able to get any other Englishmen like them or to fill their place, he said he hoped that others might be found when wanted. If they have been so, others may also be so.

*April 16.* Mr. Wood and myself went to Mr. Wyllie<sup>1</sup> at the National Liberal Association. He said the constituencies applied to them for suitable candidates. He gave such names on their list as they thought desirable and the constituencies chose themselves. He would put my name on the list of available candidates and asked me to give a short account of myself.

<sup>1</sup> F. R. S. Wyllie, one of the most influential members of the Association.

*April 17.* Went to Mr. Martin Wood and with him went to Alexandra Hotel to see Mr. Bright who received me kindly. Had a long conversation with him on sundry subjects. . . . About my object to get into Parliament, he explained that the constituencies wanted either local men or men of distinction. It was a surprise to him and others that Lal Mohun Ghose did get a constituency liberal enough to back him. It would be good if Indians got into Parliament, but the difficulties were great. . . . It appeared from the general tone of his conversation that if a good movement were made, he might help.

Saw Mr. Hodgson Pratt also at the same hotel. . . . He wished I could be taken up by one of the Universities and that I should direct my eye if possible to some Scottish constituency. The Scotch were far more liberal than the Liberals of England. He thought a good Committee should be formed to organize a great meeting in which at least the principle might be enunciated and established that India ought to be allowed representation in Parliament, and that as a first step it is desirable that some English constituency should help some Indians to get into Parliament. He thought that the French had shown more liberalism in this respect and humiliated England by allowing representatives from all their dominions and that the English ought to do the same.

Saw Lord Kimberley . . . told him of the memorial about the Vehar Water Debt. . . . He would see when the memorial arrived. On the question of the Tansa Loan, though he could not speak about this particular case, which was not yet before him, he was generally opposed to such loans or credit, or guarantee. Just as Liverpool or London does not have any loans from Government for its water works, so should Bombay do her own work. I contended that the comparison with England was not quite applicable to our case, that Bombay's want was an Imperial want. . . . He did not admit any Imperial want in it. Bombay was supplying a port for other parts of India, but was profiting also by it. . . . Then we passed on to the question of the poverty of India, of the necessity of simultaneous examinations in England and India, and he appears to have deeply imbibed all the Anglo-Indian notions of the necessity of having English agency only—the fear of the Bengalees swamping everything and being unfit to rule over the sturdy Punjabis, the Natives not being yet

fit to govern themselves, and India getting large quantities of bullion.

I tried in the short space to give such replies as I could with regard to the fallacies in much of what he had said, but one thing was clear—the notions entertained appeared to be deep convictions and could not be easily dislodged in a discursive conversation. He said, however, that the question of the examinations was, indeed, a very important one and required consideration. About the reduction of age for the competition, he said that if he had had to do it himself, he did not think he could have done it, but he did not think it proper to alter, as it was not a good thing to make frequent and sudden alterations.

I entered into an explanation of the phenomenon of the drain and how the direct political drain caused the heaping up of debt for our ordinary public wants, which but for the drain we could have supplied ourselves. The drain is now more than what would pay our debts and loans over and over again. India has immense resources, and if our produce were allowed to fructify in our own pocket there was no reason why we should not become as rich and prosperous as England herself under the law and protection we had under the British. Lord K. said "We had to pay a price for it." "Certainly," I said, "but even a good thing would be undesirable at an immoderate and destructive sacrifice. The fact is, the thing ceases to be good the moment its effect becomes destructive or hurtful."

The conversation continued in this style. The Anglo-Indian one-sided notions strong on one side, and the Indian pinch-in-the-shoe and Indian views on the other side.

*April 19* Saw Sir G. Cavenagh (Chairman of the Council of the East India Association), he thought much and well of the people of Bombay side and was of opinion that the Parsi was a very good element between the English and the Natives, knowing both and reconciling both, possessing much commonsense and exercising moderation. He regretted much there was not such an element in Bengal which would have done much good in forming the character of the Bengalees. I urged that it was not right that because the Bengalees happened to be not well thought of by the English, all India should be kept back. It was unfortunate that the Bengalees did not come into such closer contact with

Englishmen as Indians on the Bombay side did on account of their close mercantile and other connexions, and that in a large mass, whether English or any other people, you would necessarily find some rash, some foolish, some thoughtless, etc., but it is not quite right to give such character as general. He said it was unfortunate that some weak points, especially roughness with the weak and servility to the strong, were more general—a general want of manliness. He said he respected the manly people of the N.W. Provinces and the Punjab. About my object to get into Parliament, he mentioned the various difficulties and seemed to like that I should succeed.

Saw Mr. Digby<sup>1</sup>. . . He was beginning to feel depressed and deterred from further work on behalf of India, as he had not suitable and proper representatives of India. . . He confessed he had no heart now to work for Mr. Ghose. And he over and over again repeated that now that I had come, be the result about my object what it may, he will be able to work for India, with more heart and zeal. He was extremely desirous to do all that lay in his power to promote my object.

April 20 Went to Mr Hyndman. His late trial had strengthened his position immensely and a great revolution, peaceful as far as possible, was pending. He was of opinion that we should be able to convince the general English public, the working man particularly, that the reforms that I advanced would be far more beneficial to the English nation, particularly to the working man. . . If India is prosperous and rich, she would buy far more English produce and give work proportionately to the working man. He repeated over and over again he was glad I had come, that this was the best time to do something and possibly to attain my object also. Mrs. Hyndman joined earnestly in the conversation, she put the question to Mr Hyndman, what he was going to do, and said of course he meant to work below the surface and not above the surface, for in my case that would be the better way. Mr. Hyndman thought so too.

On the way Col French called me. . . He was glad to see me doing what I was doing, saying at the same time the task was a very difficult one. Speaking about the East India Association,

<sup>1</sup> William Digby, who was subsequently a close collaborator with Dadabhai in the cause of India and wrote *Prosperous British India*

he said he did not attend its meetings. He is a member and pays his subscription, but thought its work is done and over. Times had changed, new forces and influences were at work, a more extended and differently constituted organization was now necessary.

*April 26.* Surgeon-General E. Balfour called at my place (Lee). Offered kindly any service. . . . He thought it was a difficult thing and that such work did not bring either position or fame, instancing Mr. Joseph Hume. Everybody has forgotten him. Only Mr. Gladstone still speaks of him. Lord Palmerston used to think much about him. Talking about the Irish Bill, he said that the Irish were a very lazy and a treacherous people, though warm-hearted.

*April 27.* A letter from Mr. Slagg. He thought I had introductions to nearly all worth seeing. Very little chance of obtaining a seat at a by-election. But a general election could not be very far off and then I ought to have a good chance of finding a seat. . . . Advises to consult Mr. Symonds of the National Reform Union. He knows every constituency and its circumstances throughout the kingdom. Offers a letter of introduction. There is much sympathy now with India here and he is eager to see a few such representatives in the House. Their presence would do more than years of talking by English Reformers who are simply abused or villified by the official clique as representing nobody.

*April 29.* Saw Mr. Digby. He strongly recommended my changing the headdress to an English hat. Better to appear altogether like an Englishman. He said he intended to get me a ticket to the Conference of the Liberal Association in favour of the Irish Bill. I suggested whether it would be desirable that I should speak on the Irish subject at some place. I was not quite prepared for it, but I was preparing myself. He said it would be a good thing to do.

Saw Mr. W. S. Blunt<sup>1</sup>. . . . He thought I had no chance with the Conservatives at all. The Radicals alone could or would help me. . . .

Called on Capt. Eastwick. He did not like the Irish Bill, though he was a staunch Liberal and had given time and means in its support. He sympathized with me in my object to get into Parliament.

*April 30.* Saw Mr. Lal Mohun Ghose. He explained the

<sup>1</sup> Left Wing politician and author.

difference of position between the last and next general election (if it takes place). In the last election there were a large number of new vacancies. People had to search for candidates; at the next election, every constituency had already its own member if he chose to stand. The vacancies may be very few, if any. Mr. Ghose himself was not certain whether he could stand again or not, as that depended upon pecuniary help from India.

May 1. Saw Mr. Thomas Bayley Potter at Reform Club chambers. I told him as briefly as I could about the poverty of India, its causes and remedies. He . . . said he had really got from me some clear notion of India's wants. . . He offered, if I got printed, say, 2,000 copies of such portions of *The Condition of India* as he may select, to distribute them\* among the members and in the name of the Cobden Club. I agreed. Promised to send him some copies. He to select the parts and I to get them printed and to hand over copies to him. This was one of the best ways, he said, he could help the Indian cause.

May 3. Saw Mr. Hyndman. He said he would like to dedicate his republication of his articles on the Bankruptcy of India to me, to express his sentiments regarding me, as having done most for India, and that this might bring me into notice. I thanked him. I said that valuing as I did the honour, I thought it would not be discreet, as he was under a cloud with the upper classes and the Press, it might do harm to my cause. People would not think that the book was on an Indian subject, but it would be enough to prejudice them that I was with Hyndman. He acknowledged the force of what I said . . . The matter was left to be thought over by me. On returning home, I wrote to Mr. Digby and Mr. Slagg asking for their opinion.

May 4. Saw Mr. R. T. Reid . . . We went over all the principal objects of Reform for which I was particularly anxious. . . . Agreeing with me fully in all the matters of poverty, its remedy, representation in Legislative Councils, anachronism of the India Council, etc., he came to consider the practicability of advancing my object. He suggested that, as a beginning, it would be very good if I could give an address on the chief wants of India before some influential Liberal centre such as Birmingham or Leeds. That an address like that . . . will make me known, that other Liberal centres could then invite me also, and that the



forthcoming of a constituency will be naturally and in time developed. I fully agreed with him. He offered to write to Birmingham at once, if I liked. I accepted the offer at once. . . . I consulted him about Mr. Hyndman's dedication. Mr. Reid said I should adhere to my view in not having the dedication.

*May 5.* Committee meeting of the India Reform Association. It welcomed my return to England and sympathized with me in my object. Mr. Pratt proposed that a conference should be called to consider the best means of establishing the principle that India ought to have some voice in Parliament, and that till India could get a direct representation some constituencies should liberally help in the cause.

*May 6.* Breakfast with Mr Alfred Milner (afterwards Lord Milner). Had three hours with him. Explained to him all my views and aims with regard to India and also discussed the present Irish Home Rule and Land Purchase Bill. . . . He thought that short of giving legislative parliament, and keeping one parliament only, every other concession should be made such as Irishmen for Irish administration. This was the only difference between my and his views. I explained that it was time now to grant with grace and generosity what Mr. Gladstone had proposed, with any such alteration of some of the details as might on mature consideration be found desirable. . . . Not that he was quite converted to my views, but as regards India, he said he should never like to see matters driven so far as they had been with Ireland. That India's desires should be met in good time and with good grace. That all that I asked was perfectly reasonable, very moderate and practical, and that it was exceedingly desirable that the lesson of Ireland should be taken for India, and said these were not his views only just formed, but that they had been so already, and he gave me to read a para. from an address delivered by him on Liberalism and foreign policy at the National School, Harlesden, on 16th October, 1885. I was pleased that he had shown in it a thorough English spirit. He said he did not mean to talk merely in that way, but that he was anxious as far as it lay in his power to advance and carry out what he said. . . . He thought a constituency in Yorkshire was a likely one. He would do what he could. . . . He approved the idea of Mr. Reid's effort to get me invited to Birmingham.

Saw Mr. Slagg and lunched with him. He had no doubt that the voice of an Indian, and mine especially, would be of great use to India. It was arranged that when he went to Manchester, he should consult Mr. Symonds and the political Union and try to arrange for me to give an address on India . . . He liked Mr. Reid's proposal and wished it would be carried out. . . . He thought I might go in for Manchester, say, against J. Fergusson. I said I had no objection to stand where there were fair chances of success.

May 11. Saw Lord Ripon. He said it was a difficult thing to get a constituency. I said I knew that it was difficult, but the difficulty should be surmounted . . . Coming to the question now before the country, I said, apart from any party spirit, I could in all conscience say that I thought that Mr. Gladstone's proposals were worthy of the English nation and all its past history . . . When again turning upon the subject of my object, I said I thought it was Napoleon that had said that there was no such word as "impossible" in his vocabulary and that I did not think it was impossible to carry out the present object. He assured me he would help as well as he could.

May 12. Saw Mr. John Macdonald and Mrs. Macdonald. . . . It was arranged that he should do all he could in the Press for me. He would introduce me to Mr. Edwards, the editor of the *Echo*, and Mr. Brown, the editor of the *Weekly Dispatch*. He would try and get the Provincial Press to take up the subject. He would see about the *Pall Mall Gazette*, consulting Mr. Hyndman about it. He would see Mr. Townsend also, the London correspondent of *Manchester Guardian*. Mr. and Mrs. Macdonald both showed an earnest interest in my mission, and said it was most desirable I should get into Parliament. They would exert their best.

Received a letter from Mr. Thomas Bayley Potter,<sup>1</sup> Honorary Secretary, that I had been elected an Honorary Member of the Cobden Club and a letter from Mr. R. Gowing<sup>2</sup> saying that the committee of the Cobden Club had issued instructions to put my memorandum on Civil Services Reform into type.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Bayley Potter succeeded his friend Richard Cobden as M.P. for Rochdale 1865-1895)

<sup>2</sup> Richard Gowing was subsequently Secretary to the Cobden Club (1877-1898).

*May 17.* Saw Mr. Chesson. . . . He suggested that I should see if the Irish party would give their support. I explained that an Irish constituency would be no use to me even if I got it, as in case the Bills passed afterwards and the Irish members were wholly or partially removed from Parliament, I must go too. He told me one useful thing, that when there was any Conservative opposition to me, I might say that Lord Beaconsfield was favourable to and sympathized with having Indian members in Parliament from English constituencies, and that, if required, I might give his name as my authority, in which case he would be ready to state all the facts of the matter.

*May 18.* Saw Lord Stanley. Had a general talk with him about my objects and particularly about the necessity of reform in political agencies so that the Princes might be fairly and justly treated in all their relations with Government as well as with others, and in all their rights, etc.

The journal for the next four weeks contains copious notes of visits to numerous other friends and statesmen, and of lunches, dinners and teas, and conferences at places such as Kensington Palace, Northbrook Club, Reform Club, the Athenaeum, and the East India Association, at almost all of which Dadabhai was invited to speak. There were clear indications that the little-known visitor was gaining ground as he got about.

Early in June came an invitation from G. W. Blow asking Dadabhai to consent to be nominated a candidate for the St. Albans constituency. This constituency was then represented by a Tory; the adverse majority was a heavy one and the time for the candidate to get known to the electors was very short. Nevertheless, Blow and his friends were hopeful that with a candidate like Dadabhai they could win the seat. On a scrutiny of the voting at the previous election Dadabhai did not regard the prospects as encouraging. He had interviews with Blow and consultations with friends who were of opinion that it was neither in his interests nor in those of the constituency that the matter should go further.

Of the other constituencies Holborn seemed most promising. On June 18 Dadabhai met the Executive Committee of the

Liberal Association of Holborn. The result is thus briefly noted in the journal:

After some conversation they passed a resolution, while I was sitting for a few minutes in another room, that I was unanimously accepted as their candidate

On the same day the members of the Holborn Liberal Association received a letter from the Secretary as under:

I take the earliest opportunity of informing you that . . . the Executive have been so fortunate as to have introduced to them the Honourable Dadabhai Naoroji, an eminent Native of India, who, from his lengthened residence here and the great interest which he has always taken in Indian and English political life, is highly qualified to represent any constituency as well as to advocate the special interests of India.

## CHAPTER XIX

### HOLBORN AND AFTER

**H**OLBORN was no choice, but a necessity. The electorate being strongly Conservative and decidedly against the policy underlying the Irish Bill, there was not a ray of hope for anyone contesting the Borough as a Liberal candidate, particularly for one who emphatically declared Home Rule to be the Golden Rule. Even some of the personal friends of Dadabhai found it difficult to lend him their support.

I am glad (wrote Sir George Birdwood) you have found a place for which to stand, and you have my best wishes, as I earnestly desire to see a native of India in Parliament, and you are the very one of all others known to me I would just elect for the position. As to practical help, it is difficult for me to do anything in a contested borough, especially just now, for I suppose you are going to contest the seat either against a Conservative or a Unionist Liberal. Now in the present election I am all for Chamberlain—and dead against Mr. Gladstone and his supporters. I would have preferred that you should have been helped to a seat where there would have been no contest, and with regard to which you would not have been forced to take a decided line in English party politics. . . . Let me know how the contest in Holborn stands, whom you are opposing—whether a L., a U., or a C., and then I will try my best to help you; for I would give anything to see you succeed, although I would not like to do anything that would augment the Gladstonian Camp.

Dadabhai, of course, knew, as did his friends, that he was leading a forlorn hope, but prepared as he was for defeat, he could not at that stage look back. Fortunately for him, there were a few friends who shared his optimism. It would, they thought, be something, even if he failed.

That, put in a nutshell, was the issue before Dadabhai—something was better than nothing, and that something was worth coveting. "Though this constituency is a very difficult one," he said in his reply to Sir George, "it is not so utterly hopeless. But be it what it may, I have entered the lists and I am bound in honour to fight it out."

Whatever might have been the colour of Holborn politics, Dadabhai boldly put Irish autonomy in the forefront of his appeal to the electorate, which he issued from his residence at Hogarth Road, South Kensington, immediately after his adoption as a candidate for the Borough. Announcing his Liberal creed, he declared his determination to support the great measures of social reform, including a change in the Land Laws affecting dwellers in town and country, which had been announced by the great Leader of the Party. "Upon the momentous issue before the electors," he added, "I am at one with Mr. Gladstone in his noble-hearted and heroic effort to satisfy the just aspirations of the Irish people to control their own affairs, while yet remaining a part of the British Empire."

In response to this appeal various voters assured him of their support. Some, including working-class electors, put him searching questions concerning his views on a wide variety of subjects. Here is a specimen, with the writer's orthography and syntax untouched:

As an elector for Holborn and hearing you are in favour of Home Rule for Ireland and willing to give them there freedom and liberty, I now wish to ask you, if elected for Holborn, whether you will support a Bill in the House of Commons for the abolition of Compulsory Vaccination and do justice to England and Ireland too and then Englishmen will be able to say they are free.

There was a great meeting at the Town Hall of Holborn on June 24. James Bryce, Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, paid a glowing tribute to Dadabhai, whom he described as having character to enforce his views and capacity to express them. The speech of the Indian orator justified this tribute. He

had hardly spoken for two minutes when he appeared to hold his audience by his straightforward statements and simple eloquence.

Election addresses usually lose their savour the day after they are written, but with "India" substituted for "Ireland," the following observations made by Dadabhai at that meeting are as apposite to-day as they were fifty-two years ago:

The greatest argument against Home Rule is that it will disintegrate the Empire. Now it has been a surprise to me how this word Empire has been so extraordinarily used and abused. What is the British Empire? Is it simply Great Britain and Ireland? Why, it exists over the whole surface of the world, east, west, north, south—and the sun never sets upon it. Is that Empire to be broken down, even though Ireland be entirely separated? Do you mean to say that the British Empire hangs only upon the thread of the Irish will? . . . The next question is, Will Ireland separate? Well, we may say that, because we wish, it should not; but we must consider it carefully. Let us suppose that the Irish are something like human beings. Let us suppose them to be guided by the ordinary motives of humanity. I put it to you fairly whether Ireland will separate or not. I say she will not. You do know now that Ireland must be treated as you treat yourselves. You say that Irishmen must be under the same laws as Englishmen, and must have the same rights. Very good. The opponents say yes, and, therefore, they must submit to the laws which the British Parliament makes. I put to them one simple question. Will Englishmen for a single day submit to laws made for them by those who are not Englishmen? What is the proudest chapter in British history? That of the Stuarts. You did not tolerate the laws of your own Sovereign because you thought they were not your laws. You waged civil war, regardless of consequences, and fought and struggled till you established the principle that the English will be their own sovereign, and your own sons your own legislators and guides. . . . What is our own, however bad it is, is dearer to us than what is given to us by another, however high and good he may be. No one race of people can ever legislate satisfactorily for another race.

The meetings were addressed by W. S. Blunt, Hodgson Pratt, Martin Wood, the Rev. Stewart Headlam, and others; and a resolution expressing confidence in Dadabhai was carried by an overwhelming majority, only three or four dissenting voices being raised. It would have been strange, indeed, if a few meeting-wreckers, or spies from the enemy's camp, had not found their way in. Their resistance, however, was aptly described by a chronicler as that of the nut to the steam hammer. In publishing an account of the meeting the *Pall Mall Gazette* stoutly supported Dadabhai's candidature.

If the 254 millions of Her Majesty's subjects in India are ever to be represented by one of their own people in the Imperial Parliament, it would hardly be possible to find among them all one more worthy of the position or more fitted than the Hon. Dadabhai Naoroji. . . . Mr. Naoroji is a Gladstonian on Irish policy. On all other matters he is a thorough Liberal. Into Parliament he is certain to go sooner or later, and it will reflect great credit upon the electors of Holborn if they place him there now.

An eye-witness described Dadabhai's political début in these terms:

If Mr. Naoroji had changed his name to Mr. Brown or Mr. Jones no one would know him to be a Parsee. But Naoroji is a puzzler for the British elector . . . has the appearance and the manner of a cultivated English gentleman, his face a shade or two off colour, perhaps, but certainly not darker than many an Australian, tanned from long exposure to tropical suns. If physiognomy be any indication of intellectual merits, Mr. Naoroji is shrewd and penetrating, with a large leaven of benevolence. . . . His ample beard and moustache are plentifully sprinkled with white. He wears a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, which he frequently adjusts when he makes a point. He sometimes looks over his glasses with a humorous smile and gay twinkle in his bright eyes which speak volumes for his keen sense of fun. The regulation frock coat fits him like a glove, and a better platform figure it would be difficult to find. Mr. Naoroji's personality pleased the large audience before whom he was making his real



political début. . . . Mr. Naoroji is an admirable speaker, with a strong voice, capable of many inflections, from the deeply earnest to the piping playful, with command over the indignant and ironical, and his mastery of our language is marvellous in its fitness and its fluency.

On the following day, there was another monster meeting at Seven Dials where Michael Davitt, representing the democracy of Ireland, exhorted the Holborn electorate to return India's representative to Parliament. The following item in the diary of the day is interesting: "The platform was a cart-van—great enthusiasm in the audience, chiefly of working men and women."

For a week more, nightly meetings of his supporters were held in different corners of the district. "Very large and enthusiastic"; "crowded as before and enthusiastic," are Dadabhai's own comments. The English Press was struck by the favourable impression created, night after night, by the Indian politician, even on people of different political persuasions. Several newspapers referred to the difficulty in articulating his name. One of them instructed the reader that it was pronounced *Now—ro—jee*, with the accent on the first syllable. Another wished "pronounced" success to the candidate "with a name difficult to pronounce." "The electors of the division," observed *Reynolds Weekly* (June 27), "have an opportunity of returning a sound Radical in place of Colonel Duncan, their late Tory member, and at the same time, of giving a graceful example of the broad tolerance which is a feature of democracy." The *Weekly Dispatch* (June 29) believed Dadabhai would be able to speak, if elected, with special authority on Indian concerns and "also use his intimacy with those concerns in providing fresh arguments in favour of a wise measure of Home Rule for Ireland!"

Numerous leaflets and appeals to the electorate were distributed. The most impressive was an appeal by Hodgson Pratt:

If a desire to do justice to national sentiments, and to give a voice to national wants, is the inspiring principle which animates you, and of which we Englishmen are justly proud, let me ask you how far that sacred principle has been applied to the Indian

people. In India there is a population of 254,000,000, for whose welfare we are directly responsible; and yet those millions are entirely unrepresented in the Imperial Parliament. They are a people distinguished by noble qualities, and of great intelligence, possessing a civilization more ancient than our own; and in our Indian Universities their young men show high capacity in every branch of learning. . . . The election of one such man as the Honourable D. Naoroji will give hope to millions of his countrymen, and they have said so in their newspapers. They have long felt that Indian rights, interests, and needs have been shamefully neglected and ignored in the British Parliament. . . . Now you have before you a candidate of the highest intelligence, large knowledge of affairs, experience in the duties of Government, and as well acquainted with England as with India, entirely trusted by his countrymen. . . . His speeches during the last few days have shown his complete knowledge of our home politics, so that you will have in him a true representative of Englishmen, of Irishmen, and of Indians.

In India, also, friends were endeavouring to lend support to Dadabhai's efforts. Malabari was his main prop and support. He carried on an active propaganda on his behalf in the Press in India, interviewed people, or sent his lieutenant, Dinsha Wacha, to see them, with a view to holding meetings at various centres, and keeping public enthusiasm glowing till the day of the election. In one of his letters he wrote: "I find from your letter to Muncherji (Dadina) you have asked for Rs. 20,000. Go in and win." In another communication he said: "Let us work with failure in view, but work we must."

Several friends in India, however, did not appear to be of the same frame of mind.

The general sense among our set is (added Malabari in a post-script) that you cannot win and would be of little real use, even if you did win. It takes much strength to demolish pre-conceived ideas. . . . My own belief is that you may not win this time but will be kept in view for the next chance, and that view I get from Sir W. W. (William Wedderburn), who is *extremely anxious* to have meetings all over India and united telegrams to England.

This reference to Sir William Wedderburn's keen interest in the candidature of Dadabhai provides a suitable opportunity to pay a tribute to the memory of a true Briton whose love for India and whose sense of fair play sustained Dadabhai's faith in British justice. He was one of the few members of the Indian Civil Service whose conceptions of liberty, equality, and justice were not clouded by the foggy atmosphere of officialdom. When he was in harness, he marred his prospects in the Service, as Hume had done, by strenuously advocating the interests of the peasantry and the amelioration of the educational and social condition of the people generally. After his retirement from the Service in 1887 he identified himself with the Congress and toiled for it and for India, till the last day of his life, sacrificing his health as well as money. Of him, indeed, it might be said, without exaggeration, that he lived for India and died for India.

Enthusiastic meetings were held in India at various centres and Dadabhai proudly referred to them at a meeting of the electors, held at Phoenix Hall, on June 30th.

It is an extraordinary coincidence that when I was addressing the working men's meeting at Shaftesbury Avenue I received the message on the wings of lightning from India to the electors of Holborn and Deptford. I take the liberty of reading that telegram to you to show that while I am standing here before you, the 250,000,000 Indians are awaiting the result of what you of Holborn will do for them:

"The ensuing elections are watched with keen interest, especially the candidature of the Hon. Dadabhai Naoroji and Lal Mohun Ghose. The desire is keenly felt and universally expressed for their success and much gratitude is felt to Holborn and Deptford for supporting the Indian candidates. A public meeting expressing confidence will soon be held."

This very day, continued Dadabhai, when I am addressing a body of workmen—I have considered myself a working man all my life—there came this second telegram. . . .

Thus was enthusiasm sustained till the day of the election. Things, however, did not look well for the "Gladstonians." It

was the general opinion that they were out that journey and that the prospects of the Liberal candidate for Holborn were still more gloomy for want of time to work up the constituency. Writing to Dadabhai on that day (July 5), Birdwood said.

I fear I shall not be able to write M P. after your name in my next, but Wyllie has explained to me that at all events you have advertised yourself, and that your labour won't be thrown away next time I, however, fear for you owing to your going in for the miraculous G O M I wish I had been more alive to what was going on, and what was coming upon us, for, I feel sure, that owing to my influence with both the Us. and Cs, I could have got a seat for you. However, it's no use crying over spilt milk, and we must begin again *in earnest at once* after the election, introducing you to men like Mr Albert Grey

Hyndman, too, wrote that the prospects were not at all rosy, but he had something cheering to add.

You have your name well before the political world, you will, I am sure, poll well even if you do not win, and win or lose, you have made an excellent propaganda for India in the heart of London, besides being certain of a seat next time.

It was a tough fight and a gallant fight, but, as apprehended, it ended in Dadabhai's defeat. His Conservative opponent had everything on his side—personal influence and wealth, the strong Tory character of the constituency, the antipathy of Englishmen generally to the Home Rule policy of Gladstone, and above all, a split in the Liberal camp. Nevertheless, the Gladstonian Liberal secured as many as 1,950 votes against 3,651 cast in favour of Colonel Duncan. He had made the best of a forlorn hope. The result, though not a triumph, inspired hopes of success at a subsequent election.

"Just got Reuter's mentioning your defeat," ran a message from Malabari. "It does not matter. For in spite of all our enthusiasm we were prepared more for this than any other result." Expressing a fervent hope for his success at the next election, he advised his friend: "Try to cultivate the better class

of Conservative politicians. Your speech at Holborn does not preclude you from this."

Dadabhai lost not a moment in resuming the fight. On the very day of the declaration of his glorious defeat commenced his second and more superb struggle, which was to end, six years later, in a victory. In a letter to Lord Ripon (July 7) he wrote:

I had reasonable chances of success, but we now find that the split among the Liberals was far deeper than we had anticipated. Out of those who had voted at the last year's election, nearly 1,000 did not vote this time, leaving alone some 3,000 odd voters who had not voted last year also. I hope after what I have done in the short space of 9 days, your Lordship and the party will help me to a good seat.

To Hyndman he said:

Think over and see what should be my next move. The Liberals of Holborn seem to be quite indifferent to the Liberal Party. They have no organization and there seems to be very little chance of one being formed. . . . So I do not see much hope in sticking to this place.

To George Birdwood, too, he appealed for help:

I have done my best. It now remains with Mr. Wylie to take me up soon and put me into a safe seat. I saw him yesterday and I urged that he should now get me a good constituency.

To Josephine Butler, who was deeply interested in the daring struggle of one of India's noblest sons to make history, he wrote:

My whole fight was straightforward, fair, and honourable, and Col. Duncan both privately and in proposing thanks to the Returning Officer expressed his thanks to me and his gratification at the manner in which I had fought.

In Mr. Sidney Webb (now Lord Passfield), who was then Honorary Secretary to the Holborn Liberal Committee, Dadabhai found another willing helper. His views on currency and exchange coincided with Dadabhai's. In one of his letters to Dadabhai

(September 27, 1886), concerning the election campaign, he expressed his satisfaction at Dadabhai's intervention in the controversy then raging on the silver question.

I am glad (he said) you have been backing up the economic view of silver and the currency question I sometimes fear . . . that we shall be let in for the bimetallist swindle.

T. P. Gower, Secretary to the Liberal Association, was also helpful. In acknowledging Dadabhai's "very liberal donation towards the funds for Liberal Organization in Holborn," he wrote (November 8):

We have been waiting a little to ascertain to what, if any, extent the central organizing commission would co-operate with us as we have insufficient funds to do the work thoroughly. I believe that we shall ultimately get some assistance from that quarter, and I am now writing to Webb to meet me and determine what preliminary steps we shall take in the meantime, in view of the timely assistance you have given.

While Dadabhai was thus busy preparing for the next contest, some of his friends in India keenly felt his want in his own country, where they thought he could more usefully occupy himself in active patriotic service. Malabari thought so too and wrote (August 31):

In the Legislative Council we want a strong man. I don't like the ring of recent discussions therein Your presence is thus every way necessary. On the other hand, I know it is grievous to call you out now. You have commenced exceedingly well—and though the Conservatives seem to be stronger than I expected, still you need not quite despair of getting in. Even outside Parliament you can do more than anybody or many other bodies put together. . . . But the trouble is we are unable to help you in the good cause without your being here helping us to help the country. There is no organisation without you here. . . . All things considered, I think you better return by November or December. . . . This will enable you to preside at the National Congress, Bengal, which you *must do*. Come here, kick up organisations, collect materials and go again, if you like.

Day after day the election work grew on Dadabhai, and the need for a Secretary was keenly felt. Slender as his resources were, he consulted Malabari as to whether he should incur the expenses and whether Dinsha Wacha would care to accept the appointment. Malabari wrote in reply:

The idea about a private Secretary is a good one. Dinsha may come, but I fear he will be a loser, as he is about to join Mr. Tata on a larger salary; I don't think a European will cost more than Dinsha would. But if D. comes, I shall be very glad for your sake and his and of the country.

The proposal, however, had to be dropped. The question of expense caused much anxiety. Dadabhai's resources were hardly sufficient to keep him in England for a year or two, whereas it might take from five to seven years before there was another General Election. Some friends and Princes had helped him in the past: they might help again. Malabari sounded a few, but in letter after letter he complained of the apathy of friends. In one of the epistles he said: "Mr. R. D. Mehta sends message from Calcutta . . . it is useless to expect the Bengalees to do anything for Dadabhai." In another he deplored the indifference of Bombay friends:

It is no use trying Messrs. Mehta and Telang before a beginning has been made. They do not like the idea of your staying in England. But before seeing all these I'll see Sir W. W.

As regards Upper India, too, he had nothing encouraging to report.

I had a long talk with Mr. Hume about a friend. He despairs of Upper India doing anything. For Lal Mohun Ghose, he says, Bengal gave no more than Rs. 11,000. Besides, Mr. Hume thinks you ought not to spend more than Rs. 10,000 on one election. I explained your position fully to him, how much and in how many ways you have to spend. But it was not much use, and I dropped the matter.

Next to election expenses, the financial position of the *Voice of India* Press was another source of anxiety.

We have been short of money at office for some time (wrote Malabari, December 29). The *Voice* has paid well, but the *Voice* Press has not, and besides there are bills which customers are very slow to pay. The *Spectator* has lost some custom. . . . The *Voice* also has lost, and I am afraid it will lose more next year.

There was yet another source of worry, the failure of a friend. Notwithstanding the bitter experience of the past, Dadabhai had advanced a sum of £2,000 to a Parsi friend in England with whom he had business relations. That sweet-tongued business man put off payment, from year's end to year's end, putting forward one excuse or another, and yet complaining that Dadabhai was using strong language in his letters demanding payment. Dadabhai explained that it was against his nature to be hard on anyone in difficulty. "Do pray, pay me my money," he begged, "I have a large payment to make very early and I need all the money you owe to me to meet this requirement and other current expenses. . . . What a trouble you have proved to me! Do relieve me of it."

Two years later, when he was getting more and more anxious about his own financial position, we find him appealing to the same debtor in these piteous terms: "You do not seem to have any idea of the worry you cause me. Do think more of me. That you should leave me in the position of begging of you in this manner for my money is sad."

Such difficulties, however, did not deflect Dadabhai in the least from the path of public service chalked out for him by himself, or deter him for a moment from rushing to the help of friends in distress. To give only one instance. With Major Evans Bell of the Madras Staff Corps and his family Dadabhai was on intimate terms. The gallant Major loved India and had done his best to promote her interests as an historian and a controversialist. Maharaja Tookajee Rao Holkar owed much to him for active assistance in clearing his character. The charge against the Prince was that he did not, at the first burst of the Sepoys' revolt in 1857, rush to the aid of the British as the other Chiefs, who had received territorial rewards for their loyalty, had done.



For twenty years he demanded a fair inquiry, but died with the calumnies officially fixed on him unremoved. Bell, at last, cleared his name. After patient research and study of official documents, he established in a confidential appeal, published subsequently, that on the fatal July 1 the Maharaja had collected within his palace every one of the British residents that he could and had, at the risk of his own life, refused to sacrifice a hair of their heads.

Mysore, too, owed not a little to Bell for its existence as an Indian State. Never did any man fight a better fight for those who were injured or oppressed and no one had such claims on the gratitude of the Princes and the people of India as he had. Early in the year 1887 his health gave way.

Pray come and see us (wrote Mrs. Bell in distress, May 27). An awful blow is fallen on me. Major Bell is (the doctor tells me) *incurable* and will not be here long, they think. His heart is broken, though he is not to know how ill he is yet. . . . Pray come and tell him India will be sure to do something for him in the end.

Dadabhai went straight to his friend, cheered him up, and arranged to have an address presented to him, thanking him for his numerous published works on Indian questions and for his eminent services to India, and expressing sympathy in his illness. He also wrote to various Princes to give financial help to the dying man. He sent Mrs. Bell a cheque: she could only accept it as a loan and sent him a promissory note for the amount. The address was adopted at a meeting hurriedly held at the Westminster Palace Hotel, presided over by Dadabhai, and it gave no little comfort to the hero who was struggling on like a wounded lion to his death.

There was no response from the Princes. Dadabhai also approached Major Bell's brother. The Major passed away. His high-souled widow wrote to Dadabhai:

Through you and Mr. Chesson and Mr. Wood I was enabled to make my beloved husband's death-bed not all sadness. None but I know the martyrdom of his life. The debts mentioned

before, including my debt of honour to your generous and noble self, I shall work hard to pay.

In another letter (October 17) she wrote:

The more we think of your kindness the more we feel overpowered. Lina (her daughter) and I will never cease to think of it and hope we may somehow and some day be useful to you, though we hope the lion will never need the mouse!

The lion, however, did need and did soon receive her valued help in connexion with his election.

Mrs. Bell had worked all her life in view of the straitened circumstances of her husband. After his death she recommenced her work at the Hyde Park Academy of Music, refusing to accept the amount sent by relatives.

All my schools have waited for me (she said). Lina will be at her studio on Monday, so we two will fight the Demon Debt. He cannot conquer, for even if I die I am insured beyond his claim.

Towards the closing days of the year 1886 came to Dadabhai a call from India to attend the second session of the Indian National Congress. Dadabhai went to Calcutta during Christmas week and was elected President. His Presidential Address was remarkable for its tone of moderation and restraint. "What is it for which we are now met?" he asked. "Is this Congress a nursery for sedition and rebellion against the British Government (*cries of 'No! No!'*) or is it another stone in the foundation of the stability of that Government? (*Cries of 'Yes! Yes!'*) . . . Let us speak out like men and proclaim that we are loyal to the backbone."

The Congress had been criticized for failure to promote social reform. Dadabhai put in a vigorous plea in defence of its policy.

We are met together as a political body to represent to our rulers our political aspirations, not to discuss social reforms, and if you blame us for ignoring these, you should equally blame the House of Commons for not discussing the abstruser problems of

mathematics or metaphysics. But, besides this, there are here Hindus of every caste, amongst whom, even in the same province, customs and social arrangements differ widely. There are Mahomedans and Christians of various denominations, Parsis, Sikhs, Brahmos—men, indeed, of each and all of these numerous classes which constitute in the aggregate the people of India. How can this gathering of *all* classes discuss the social reforms needed in each individual class? What do any of us know of the internal home life, of the customs, traditions, feelings, prejudices of any class but our own? How could a gathering, a cosmopolitan gathering like this, discuss to any purpose reforms needed in any one class? Only the members of that class can effectively deal with the reforms therein needed. A National Congress must confine itself to questions in which the entire nation has a direct participation, and it must leave the adjustment of social reforms and other class questions to class Congresses.

It was only natural that Dadabhai should refer, in this address, to the question of representation of India in Parliament:

All the most fundamental questions on which hinge the entire form and character of the administration (said he) are decided by Parliament. No matter what it is, Legislative Councils or the Services—nothing can be reformed until Parliament moves and enacts modifications of the existing Acts. Not one single genuine Indian voice is there in Parliament to tell at least what the native view is on any question. This was most forcibly urged upon me by English gentlemen, who are in Parliament themselves; they said they always felt it to be a great defect in Parliament, that it did not contain one single genuine representative of the people of India.

This session of the Congress was notable for the scheme of Council Reform adumbrated under the guidance of Dadabhai as President. After this, there was a recurring demand at each Congress session that Indians should be allowed, through their elected representatives, a voice in the Legislatures. After having attended the Congress session at Bombay in 1889, Charles Bradlaugh, "the protagonist of lost causes" and "the friend and

champion of India," introduced a Bill in the House of Commons for constitutional reform. Viscount Cross, then Secretary of State for India, however, offered to bring in a Bill of his own during the following year. Bradlaugh withdrew his Bill, but he did not live to see Lord Cross's promised Bill, which ultimately became Act of 1892. Compared with Bradlaugh's Bill, it was a greatly emasculated measure. Dadabhai was not satisfied, nor the public generally. The so-called right of election conferred, under it, on the Local Bodies and other electorates, was subject to acceptance or rejection by Government. The artillery of the Congress was, therefore, directed on the provisions of the Act and the defects of the regulations framed under it.

The next most important service rendered by Dadabhai during his visit to India was the evidence he gave before the Public Service Commission, which was then sitting in Bombay. He had agitated for years for such an inquiry; he had moved a resolution at the previous session of the Congress, asking Government to embark on the inquiry, and just before he gave the evidence he had published in England a paper on the question. The ready response from Government was hailed by him as a proof of the sincerity of the desire of the rulers to do something at least towards the removal of a great wrong.

In his evidence Dadabhai stressed the demand for holding simultaneous examinations in England and India, the standard and tests of qualifications, pay, leave, and pension allowances being alike for all candidates. "Any proposal to fix a portion of the service to be allotted to natives would," he submitted, violate the fundamental principle of the Act of 1833 and of the Proclamation of 1858. Should, however, Government be not prepared to do full justice . . . Government may, for the present, provide that until further experience was obtained, a quarter or half of the successful candidates should be English." The main grievance, the gravamen of his complaint, he said, was the requirement of temporary residence in England precedent to first competition.

Witness after witness supported Dadabhai in his demand.

Concerted opposition, however, came from a section of his own fellow-countrymen, Muhammadans, who feared that an examination held in India would lead to a preponderance of Hindus in the Civil Service to the detriment of the interests of their own community.

With the greatest chagrin Dadabhai learnt, after he returned to London, that his friend Kazi Shahbuddin had also joined in the opposition. On July 15, 1887, he wrote to Kazi in anguish:

How your action has paralysed not only our own efforts, but the hands of our English friends, and how keenly I feel this, more so because you have based your action on selfish interests, that because the Muhammadans are backward, therefore you would not allow the Hindus and all India to go forward In the House of Commons I think Mr. Bright has stoutly urged the necessity of an examination in India to put us on an equality with English candidates. Today when he would and could have urged the same thing with ten times the force, he feels himself staggered, and owing to your opposition he feels puzzled and cannot help us What a blight you have thrown upon our future and how you have retarded our progress for a long time to come! This disunion will hurt us in a variety of ways I do not know whether I can hope that before the Commission's work has ended, you will still undo the mischief in some way.

## CHAPTER XX

### MEMBER FOR FINSBURY

**B**ACK to England, Dadabhai was busy reconnoitring the battlefield. Of all the constituencies suggested to him, he considered Central Finsbury the most promising. In a letter to Malabari (March 2, 1887), he wrote "This week I had pretty good work in canvassing the executive of a particular constituency—Central Finsbury. This is private!" A week later, he informed his friend that there seemed to be good chances of success. He had impressed on everyone that he was a Home Ruler, not one who would give merely a silent vote in the House, but one who would work actively for the cause. His whole time was at his command and he was prepared to devote it to the work of the constituency. He was also desirous of getting certain measures for reform in the administration of India passed in Parliament, and should he be successful, the electors of Central Finsbury would have, he said, the blessings of the Indian people or enabling "a small single voice" to speak on their behalf in the Imperial Assembly.

How things were moving in his favour his family learnt through another channel. It was a letter from Fram Dadina, who was then a student at Cambridge, to Maki Dadabhai:

Your dear Pa has just passed his Previous Examination in Politics. Just fancy the idea of an old man of 62 going in for such labour! Hope all of us will be half as useful. You will know more about it in a fortnight, but for the present I must leave you—certainly, in suspense, with regret, as I myself do not know much. Guess as much as you can and let me know, and we shall see whether you turn good prophet or not!

Referring to this letter in her letter of July 17, 1888, Maki wrote to her father:

Our rather anxious dispirited spirits about you were revived by dear Fram. . . . The only thing I can make out is that you have secured a seat and as he writes that you have passed your exam., you have chances of success on your side.

It was, however, only the first hurdle that was leapt over; a good many more remained to put Dadabhai's strength and power of endurance to the severest test to which they had ever been subjected during his life.

The interesting story of the "examination" begins with the resignation submitted in March 1888 by the Hon. Howard Spensley, candidate for Central Finsbury. The General Council of the Liberal and Radical Association for the Division asked its Executive Committee to submit the names of four gentlemen for the selection of a candidate to fill the vacant position. Out of thirteen candidates whose names were before the Committee, they selected four, of whom Dadabhai was the second. The first choice was Earl Compton, son of the Marquess of Northampton. He, however, declined to stand; and another election took place. According to the notes left behind by Dadabhai, "some eight or ten ballots had taken place in the course of six months, from March to August," and he had stood first on all occasions except when Lord Compton was in the field. At the election, held on August 15, eight names were submitted to the members, with the result that in the last ballot Dadabhai was the first of the four selected, the other three being Richard Eve, F. A. Ford, and Cyril Dodd.

On the following day, Edward Jacob, Secretary to the Association, wrote to Dadabhai: "Please allow me to congratulate you. The voting last night was as follows: Mr. Naoroji 49, Mr. Eve 45, Mr. Ford 23, and Mr. Dodd 7." Eve, too, congratulated his rival. It was a proud moment in Dadabhai's life. In his weekly letter to the family he wrote: "It has been a very good beginning. I have earned, as far as I can judge, respect and credit from all sides; from my opponents and friends."

The very next day, however, when he saw the Secretary,

he was informed that a requisition for another meeting was being signed. Dadabhai was indignant. The version of the other side, however, was that there had been no valid election. According to an interview given, a year later, by one of the scrutineers, named Brighty, to a representative of the *Holborn Guardian* (September 14, 1889), Dadabhai's own friends were responsible for the muddle in which the members of the Party found themselves. Immediately after the result of the votes taken at the last election had been announced, he said, Dadabhai's friends shouted "hurrah" and rushed out of the room.

The final announcement had not been made, the final vote had not been taken, and the Chairman said he would not take the final vote that night, on account of so many leaving the room. There were several gentlemen near the platform who said, "You must put the final vote and then we would demand a division", but the Chairman thought under the circumstances it would be unfair to Mr Naoroji's friends to put the final vote and to grant a division on that night, and he did not do so. I have no doubt as one of the tellers that if Mr Naoroji's friends had acted properly and remained till the final vote was put and the division, if demanded, taken, the Chairman would have had to pronounce that Mr Naoroji was the choice of the Council.

Strange that in the circumstances the Secretary of the Association should have written to Dadabhai, immediately after the meeting, congratulating him on his election. There was not a word in his letter about the protest or about the fact that the final vote yet remained to be taken. It is still more astonishing that F. Schnadhorst, the highest organizing officer of the National Liberal Federation, should have written to Dadabhai (August 18).

Pray do not be influenced by the attack on you. You have been fairly selected and it is our duty to support you. I will do everything I can.

Dadabhai had not received the slightest help from the Liberal Headquarters in connexion with his previous contest, nor had



he so far received any encouragement from them in his second venture. He was, therefore, delighted to receive Schnadhorst's letter and regarded it as the support of the central organization. "If you give way at Finsbury," said Schnadhorst to Dadabhai at an interview, "you will not have the remotest chance of being accepted by any other constituency." Schnadhorst was also opposed to the suggestion that the matter should be referred to arbitration; he advised Dadabhai to go on steadily with his work and promised "all necessary support" at the proper time.

In pursuance of the opposition's requisition, a fresh meeting was called by the local authorities for September 3. Dadabhai declined to go to that meeting, contending that the Council had no right to interfere with the decisive vote of August 15. "I cannot see," he added, "how you feel justified in countenancing such a proceeding as that a fresh vote should be taken on the ground that the majority was small. Had the vote been against me, even by the casting vote of the Chairman, I should have considered myself honourably bound by it."

In what fighting form he was may be gathered from his letter to his "Dears All" (September 7):

Last Monday, 3rd September, the requisition meeting of the Council was held. My protest against any interference with the last vote in my favour of 15th August thrown aside and a fresh vote is passed in favour of Mr. Richard Evc. They have thus thrown the gauntlet to me and I have picked it up. I have informed them that I will go to the poll and contest the seat. I have called a public meeting for Monday next 10th September to tell the Electors that I will not retire but go to the poll when election comes. So I have now tough work before me.

Pretty tough work it was too! The family got a glimpse of it in his letter of November 9: "My work is going on at Central Finsbury. Both money and mind have a hard pull upon them. But must do one's duty, or life is hardly worth living."

Where his duty lay in such circumstances was stated in clearer terms in his address to the public meeting, held in Foresters'

Hall, Clerkenwell, on September 11. The following extract from a published report of the speech left no doubt as to his intentions.

What could they think of him, and how could they regard his conduct if he shrank from maintaining his rights? Liberalism would be unworthy of the name, and the high and noble principles which it embodied, and with which it was and had through all political struggles and contests been heretofore associated and identified, if an innovation of that kind were allowed to pass unchallenged. In fact, the Liberal ranks would be shattered to pieces if they tolerated such an arbitrary and unprecedented proceeding.

Fifty-three members of the Council had submitted a protest against the holding of the second meeting. It was totally ignored. His supporters were treated with derision, and they had to leave the room in a body, as a further protest and repudiation of any responsibility for the illegal proceedings. They were very much mistaken if they imagined for one moment that he would yield to such pressure. Indeed, if he were to give way, he would be acting in contradiction to the whole course of conduct of his life, "which had been an endeavour to fight fairly, and battle for right and justice."

At the meeting the Secretary submitted that the communication he had addressed to Dadabhai should not have been construed "as an official letter." It did not mention the name of the Association in any way; nor was his name signed to it as Hon. Secretary to the Association. What, then, about a great many more letters from Jacob which were in Dadabhai's possession and which did not bear the words "Hon. Secretary"? Were they not, asked Dadabhai, to be treated as official? Official or unofficial, the letter recorded the simple fact that there were 49 votes in his favour, the highest recorded; and he was concerned with facts, not with polemics. The audience was with him. It was proposed and seconded that those present at the meeting pledged themselves to give justice and fair play to "Mr. Naoroji" at the poll. To this an amendment was moved to the

effect that the meeting was of opinion that the differences between the Association and Dadabhai should be left to arbitration. What a warm reception was accorded to this amendment may be gathered from the following extract from the printed report of the proceedings:

Mr. Wildbore said . . . he believed Mr. Naoroji to be a sound good Radical, a man worthy to represent any constituency, but as an elector of Central Finsbury he had not only to study the claims of Mr. Naoroji, but he had also to study what would be the most likely means of winning the seat. He had no hesitation in saying that Mr. Naoroji had committed an error (cries of "No! No!") The members of the Council had invited Mr. Naoroji and Mr. Eve to attend the meeting of September 3, but Mr. Naoroji declined. With reference to the letter of Mr. Jacob, he felt satisfied that it was not official—"Yes" and "Bunkum"— . . . he should like to call attention (cries of "Time" and uproar) to the action of the Association (cries of "Hall & Co"). So great was the uproar at this period that Mr. Wildbore's observations were completely drowned.

The amendment was lost by a large majority.

The deputation that had waited upon Dadabhai had tried to impress upon him that they had been suggesting arbitration because they believed he was not strong enough and because they were anxious that the chances of success should not be jeopardized. Dadabhai, however, said that when he was selected, there was no question or condition about his being strong enough to win the seat. Any subsequent excuse that he was not strong enough was "not only unjustifiable but unworthy of being brought forward, to back out of, or to break, the pledges so clear, unqualified, sympathetic, and spontaneous." Weak or strong, he was determined to go to the poll, and the stalwart, who had never yet known what it was to be discomfited, went on steadily forging his way to the goal he had in view, defying threats of opposition from opponents and desertion by friends, defying every obstacle. He paid house-to-house visits to the electors, attended ward meetings, gave numerous talks and lectures,

presided at or addressed political meetings, social meetings, and soirées, attended exhibitions, concerts, performances in aid of charities, and kept himself constantly before the eyes of the electorate. The more he came in contact with the voters, the better was he understood. His phenomenal energy and tenacity made him a popular figure in the neighbourhood. At every ward meeting he reiterated his determination to go to the poll and admiring audiences passed resolution after resolution, pledging support to him at the election. Thereafter, an election committee was formed; more than two hundred electors joined it and signed individually a declaration to secure his return at the ensuing election, as the properly elected candidate for the Finsbury Division.

Such support was, however, nothing compared with that given unwittingly by Lord Salisbury. One night Dadabhai went to sleep, still a nameless figure in the world of British politics, and woke to find himself famous. In his notorious Edinburgh speech on November 30, whilst trying to explain away why the Conservative majority in the latest Holborn contest had dwindled, the Premier of England indulged in language reminiscent of that used by slave-owners to coloured people.

It was undoubtedly a smaller majority than Col. Duncan obtained; but then Colonel Duncan was opposed by a black man; and however great the progress of mankind has been, and however far we have advanced in overcoming prejudices, I doubt if we have yet got to that point of view where a British constituency would elect a black man.

The audience shouted "shame," and cheered the speaker, little dreaming that the mud flung at the eminent Indian was to bespatter the noble Lord himself, to his consternation.

I am speaking roughly, continued Lord Salisbury amidst laughter and cries of "hear, hear," and using language in its colloquial sense, because I imagine the colour is not exactly black, but, at all events, he was a man of another race.

Those two words—BLACK MAN—simply kicked Dadabhai into fame. The name of the hitherto little-known Indian, difficult

of articulation as it had so far been, was within twenty-four hours on the lips of everyone throughout the United Kingdom! Wide of any applicability to him as those words were, they caused Dadabhai not the least annoyance; on the contrary, he regarded such an attack as a blessing in disguise. To the whole of India, however, the impudent allusion to racial difference gave great offence; it was resented also in Liberal circles, and the Gladstonians lost not a moment in turning it to political account. The British public too, as a whole, appeared to have been shocked by the maladroitness of the Premier. In political contests a good deal of licence is allowed to one's tongue, but even to such licence there is a becoming limit. Moreover, in this case, it was not an ordinary partisan indulging in a sneer on a political platform. It was the Prime Minister of England, who was expected to remember, even in the excitement of an election campaign, that it was his duty, as one holding the highest office in the British Empire, more than that of any other British subject, to cement by his personal example of courtesy and sympathy the ties of loyalty and attachment between England and the countries owing allegiance to the British Crown. Even his own friends, therefore, stood aghast at his words, calculated, as they appeared to be, to excite racial prejudice. The British friends of Dadabhai, who had regarded him as no less than an Englishman during his prolonged residence in England, felt impelled to tell Lord Salisbury that Dadabhai's skin was little darker than his own. Speaking of Dadabhai as his "revered and saint-like friend," George Birdwood observed, in his Introduction to Sorabji Jhangir's *Representative Men of India*, that the most cursory examination of Dadabhai's portrait would "suffice to show how altogether inaccurately, through the casual use of a colloquialism, Lord Salisbury applied to the owner of so Caucasian a head the descriptive phrase of black man!"

In fact, in commending him to the Liberal Association of Holborn, William Digby had anticipated objection to the selection of Dadabhai on racial grounds and had clinched that issue in his letter of February 16, 1888:

Though bearing so strongly Indian a name, Mr. Naoroji is to all intents and purposes an Englishman as well as an English subject. His long residence in this country and his thorough mastery of our tongue, added to his English appearance, take away any objection which might occur (all other things being satisfactory) to his not being an Englishman.

This estimate of the Indian candidate was confirmed by Schnadhorst in his letter to Digby (August 18):

In my opinion, although a Parsi is much handicapped in an English constituency, Naoroji is not only the better man and politician of the two, but is more likely to win. Naoroji will be more liked the better he is known—Eve just the opposite.

It was an Indian of such outstanding reputation whom the petty-minded peer had tried to disparage. Little did he dream that such an insult would add one more to the battle-cries of Liberalism and that his offensive words would be flung in his teeth from the Solway to the Severn. Statesmen like Gladstone and Morley seized the opportunity forthwith to have the Premier pilloried.

The first to fall on Salisbury was John Morley. At a Liberal and Radical demonstration, held in Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell, on December 12, he reminded the audience that he had remarked a year ago that when Lord Salisbury made a speech, that speech was sure to contain at least one blazing indiscretion. His friends would hardly deny that the speech in which his Lordship had warned them to maintain the Empire and endeavoured to explain the Holborn election contained a very blazing indiscretion. Now that was no vulgar Jingo of the street. "It was," he said, "the Prime Minister. It was the man who spoke in the name of the people of England from his position, and it was the fault of London that Salisbury held the position he did."

Speaking at Limehouse Town Hall, three days later, Gladstone asked the audience to look across the sea, where their responsibilities were so great. He was referring to the expression used

by the Prime Minister which had given deep offence to many millions of their fellow-countrymen in India. Having committed that fault in an unhappy moment of forgetfulness, should he not have offered an apology? They waited for that apology, and the people of India waited for it.

Such wars of words are no criterion of the real feeling of the populace, but the numerous letters that poured in, from Englishmen from all parts of the country, from friends and strangers alike, emphatically expressing their abhorrence of the language used by the Premier and their wish to see Dadabhai enter Parliament, established clearly that he had been placed prominently before the English public by Lord Salisbury's sneer. In a way, it was also a matter for congratulation that this incident brought into play the better emotions of the English people and awakened in them a sense of reality of the unity of their Empire in the East.

It was reported that even Queen Victoria had expressed her grief that one of her Indian subjects should have been insulted by her own Prime Minister. In giving this news, the *Bradford Daily Telegraph* observed (December 18):

Lord Salisbury has, no doubt, expressed his contrition to the Queen. Her Majesty, it is well known, appreciates very highly the Indian servants whom she now possesses, and they are most of them much darker than Mr. Naoroji.

For the next few weeks "Salisbury's Black Man" was flooded with invitations to teas and luncheons and dinners, the most notable being the banquet given by the members of the National Liberal Club on January 21, 1889, to mark their disapproval of Lord Salisbury's intolerant language. Lord Ripon, who presided and proposed the health of the guest of the evening, said they had done well to mark their high sense of Dadabhai's character and of the services which he had rendered both to India and to England. To Salisbury's folly he discreetly made only a distant allusion, which gracefully vindicated the honour of both the guest of the evening and his outraged countrymen.

Mr. Naoroji (he said) was well entitled to represent amongst them the culture, the intelligence, and the public spirit of his land, and he would only say that if he should hereafter find his way into the British House of Commons, he would make a most valuable member of that illustrious assembly, and a very admirable representative of the Indian people

In responding to the toast Dadabhai observed that he regarded the occasion and the events of the few preceding days as an epoch in Indian history. Frederic Harrison then proposed "The Unity of the Empire" and W Hunter, "Our Fellow-subjects in India." Thus were sentiments of common respect, of common citizenship, and of membership of one polity, with a common system of education and civilization, stimulated from different platforms and different forums, bringing to Dadabhai support from many an unexpected quarter

At any rate, Schnadhorst and Arnold Morley, two pillars of the Liberal organization, now seemed to recognize that Dadabhai had a position in the Liberal ranks which none could question, and they asked him to go and speak at various meetings held in furtherance of the Liberal cause. Writing to Wacha on January 21, 1890, he remarked facetiously "I am quite a boy at school now as ever. Isn't it—to pass no end of examinations in large public meetings?"

Some poor electors were under a delusion that Dadabhai was a millionaire, as he had undertaken to bear all election expenses. This led to constant demands on his slender purse. He had to plead inability in several cases and for those whom he helped he laid down a condition that they were not to canvass for him or induce any elector to vote for him.

If I am to lend you money (he wrote to A. R., a working man of the borough) I must sacrifice your assistance in any way at the time of election. This I want you to understand distinctly, secondly, though I might subscribe to any public movement on behalf of the working man, I cannot undertake to help each individual working man privately



Other more artful beggars asked for loans, not alms, but it was easy for Dadabhai to take shelter under the Corrupt Practices Act and plead his helplessness to render assistance in that way.

Believing that Dadabhai had been unfairly treated, although he had a majority of the Association with him, Schnadhorst had encouraged Dadabhai to persist in his candidature. Later, however, he appeared to have thought that his judgment was formed somewhat hastily. There was a strong caucus opposed to Dadabhai, causing a split in the Liberal Party in the constituency. He believed along with many other members of the Party that the best, if not the only method of healing the division in the Party was by arbitration—a course which both sides could accept with honour and which no true Party man could be justified in rejecting. Dadabhai's opponent had accepted arbitration, but he had definitely refused it; no amount of persuasion could in the least degree shake his determination. In the circumstances the promised support was withdrawn. Dadabhai regarded it as a breach of faith.

The consideration uppermost in the minds of the Party officials was how the seat could be won. Without a united Party the seat could not have been regained and the Party could not have been united unless the rival candidates had consented to arbitration. The proposal for arbitration was, therefore, revived. During the interval, however, Dadabhai had worked hard and secured active help from the electors. Apart from that consideration, he held that the acceptance of such a proposal would be a cowardly and suicidal act—no constituency in the United Kingdom would have him thereafter. Through his Election Committee he sent a statement explaining why he could not and should not go to arbitration. The breach thereupon grew wider and the struggle harder. In a letter to Malabari (December 13) he wrote: "The seat would be lost to Conservatives, but my course is not changeable, I shall go on, happen what may."

Dadabhai could not have been oblivious of the fact that by rejecting arbitration he had placed himself in a false position with the Liberal Party. He, however, honestly felt that he could

not recede from the position taken up by him without betraying his supporters, and without disgracing himself and discrediting his country. He could not help thinking that the Central Liberal organization would never have wished to put him in such a position, had its members been aware of what had transpired between him and Schnadhorst, who had encouraged him not to flinch, promised him the support of the Party, and virtually led him to commit himself absolutely not to go to arbitration. It was no fault of the members of the Party that in their ignorance of these facts they should resent the conduct of Dadabhai in flouting their wishes to settle the matter by arbitration. At the same time he had to consider that he had already adopted a definite line of action and informed the electors at a public meeting that relying on their support he would not submit to arbitration. The proposal for arbitration had been, in fact, put to the vote and rejected at the meeting of the electors. Was he to treat their decision as of little importance and leave his supporters to be the laughing-stock of his opponents? Apart from these considerations, could he have conscientiously accepted arbitration, knowing that Schnadhorst had promised him not only his but the Liberal Party's support? Would that have been fair to Eve, who might thereby have been led to believe that he had an even chance?

The tension was, however, relieved in June 1890 by the retirement of Eve, who had been invited to contest another seat. Dadabhai was left alone as the Liberal candidate for Central Finsbury. On July 1, R. M. Griffith, the friendly Secretary to the Central Finsbury Liberal and Radical Council, wrote to Schnadhorst that the position in the constituency was then clear for Dadabhai. He was pledged to go to the poll, where, if not obstructed by any more impediments from the Liberal side, he was sure to regain the seat with a very substantial majority. Every care should, therefore, be taken that the course of so strong and popular a candidate should not be again impeded and his two years of good and useful work weakened.

After looking into the proceedings of the Council and other

papers bearing on the subject Schnadhorst advised Griffith that the Council should go on steadily strengthening Dadabhai's position, and he promised to keep the road clear for the Parsi candidate. Such being the understanding, the manifesto of a rival Liberal candidate, issued in January 1891, came to Dadabhai as a thunderbolt falling from a calm empyrean. A new association (not duly elected) had been formed, and it had put forward the candidature of F. A. Ford, avowedly with the recognition of the leaders of the Liberal Party. A long correspondence ensued, Dadabhai's relations with the Party were painfully strained. In his letters to friends he complained bitterly of breach of faith. He was not, however, the man to nurse his disappointments, that tale of woe was not to be taken as the lament of a feeble woman. "Once you enter the field," he wrote to Wacha on March 20, "fight out with all your might, whatever comes." Again, on April 17, he said: "There is now open war with them." The tone of that letter convinced his militant friend in India that he had put forth every atom of his strength in the campaign.

I must go on for the sake of India herself, besides my honour, be the result what it may. I cannot allow it to be said that bullying and persecution can easily drive away an Indian from his resolution . . . I am in the right . . . I am fighting for justice and rights.

So there he stood, on the rock of right and justice, four-square to all the winds that blew. Digby wrote once more to Schnadhorst (February 22, 1891), reminding him of the cordiality with which he had approved of the course Dadabhai had taken, in vindication of the rights of a candidate who had been selected by the Association, and appealing to him to do what was possible for "a thoroughly sound Liberal and a good Party man." Schnadhorst replied (April 10) that no influence could at that stage secure for Dadabhai the kind of support which was essential for winning the seat.

I can state for myself, Mr. Morley and for Mr. Causton (he said) that had Mr. Naoroji been willing to adopt our suggestion,

all our influence would have been exerted to secure for him the support of the united party. . . . I look upon the seat as gone. The only chance at any time of securing unity of the party was for Mr. Naoroji to place himself entirely in our hands, relying upon our desire to deal fairly and generously with him.

Digby replied (June 26):

The Party Leaders cannot afford to put Naoroji even apparently (he is not really) in the wrong. As Lord Salisbury's black man welcomed in any constituency and honoured by men like Lord Rosebery, as the hero of a great Liberal banquet presided over by Lord Ripon, as the gentleman on behalf of whom and his outraged countrymen Mr Gladstone called upon the Prime Minister for an apology—if Naoroji is made the victim of the petty and wholly discreditable intrigue now going on in Central Finsbury, he will become the occasion of a great deal of comment which cannot fail to harm our cause. Can you not, will you not, put your foot upon the unconstitutional proceedings in Finsbury?

The correspondence culminated in an interview in the month of July. Digby there and then drew up a memorandum recording the purport of the discussion:

Mr. Schnadhorst . . . could not but regard with regret the dual candidature in Central Finsbury; that he could not depart from the position of neutrality which he had taken; but that if Mr. Ford should retire and Mr. Naoroji were left alone as candidate, he would do all that he could to persuade those who were now opposed to Mr. Naoroji to withdraw their opposition, and in the interest of the Party to support him. Further, that Headquarters had had nothing whatever to do with a second selection being made, and that Mr. Ford, as second candidate for Central Finsbury, would receive no assistance at all.

"I should like to keep it for a day or two," said Schnadhorst, "and will then send it to you."

Digby agreed.

The "day or two," however, never drew to a close. Schnadhorst prudently sought cover in silence. The role of neutrality was resuscitated by the Party; but the rival candidate appeared

to get all the backing from headquarters. Dadabhai now felt he could no longer withhold facts from the public. In a letter to the *Weekly News and Chronicle* (July 28), couched in most temperate language, he explained his position to the electors and appealed for justice: "I am informed that the Head Organizing Officials are maintaining a neutral position, but I feel no doubt that, in remembrance of their pledges and promises of support, they will be with me, and that united in the work to which in Central Finsbury during the last three years I have been devoted, we will win back the seat, and thus add another to the recent Liberal triumphs."

Highly pleased with the moderation and conciliatory tone of this letter, Digby sent a copy to Schnadhorst, on the very day on which it was published, in the hope that the people at headquarters would be fair to Dadabhai, but, weeks afterwards, he got a curt reply to the effect that Schnadhorst had no intention of continuing the correspondence. Then Griffith stepped into the breach, but even his letter was returned, unopened.

The rift among the Radicals in Central Finsbury was thus widened. All hopes of restoring harmony amongst them were shattered. On November 2, however, came cheering news from Mrs. Bell. She had received from William Harcourt "a very satisfactory letter marked 'private,' pledging Ripon and Reay as well as himself to the 'desire that Dadabhai should become, at next election, a Member of the House of Commons.' " Another encouraging factor was a weighty representation sent by several members of the National Liberal Club to the Central Liberal Association, the National Liberal Federation and the National Liberal and Radical Union, urging that an otherwise safe Liberal seat would be greatly imperilled unless the leaders of those organizations recognized the claims of Dadabhai.

By this time the direction of affairs in the Liberal Party had passed into Lord Ripon's hands. He endeavoured to get Ford out of the contest; on the other hand the officials of the Party pressed him to persuade Dadabhai to agree to arbitration. Lord Ripon thought that the best solution of the difficulty lay in

finding another constituency for Dadabhai. Malabari was then in England; he asked Dadabhai to consider the suggestion carefully, and added: "If you take this advice, I'll write to Lord Ripon to get you a safe place and to extricate you in as honourable a manner as possible. I trust you have written nothing to Mr. Schnadhorst recently to offend him. I have been making anxious inquiries about him—every Liberal speaks highly of him; none will care to go against his wishes, not even Mr. Gladstone."

Dadabhai had, however, chosen his course and he adhered to it. Hearing that the London Liberal and Radical Union had determined to crush him, he poured out his heart freely to Malabari:

I have patiently borne an amount of persecution and worry since March 1889, of which you can hardly form an adequate conception, firstly because of my devotion to the Liberal cause and the Liberal Party, and secondly, because of my gratitude to Mr. Gladstone and Lord Ripon and the Party generally for the part they played on the occasion of Lord Salisbury's remark about me.

He would, he added, avoid coming to blows with his opponents, but if forced into open fight, he would certainly fight for the sake of justifying and maintaining his own and his countrymen's "honour, fidelity, and firmness for justice." Once more, however, he recited with child-like simplicity the confirmation of his faith in the conscience of the British people:

I have no fear but that the usual love of justice and fair play inherent in the British people will prevail and that in this case of Justice they will give me their protection from ill-advised and entirely unmerited attack.

Dadabhai's troubles weighed heavy on Malabari's mind, but he thought it necessary to sound a warning:

All that you say is cogent. But I trust your public utterances may not have to be so cogent. There is risk in them of making the Liberals turn their back upon Indian candidates altogether.

You should not be the cause of such misfortune. I know you would never. I hope also there may be no need of dragging this affair into public.

Acting on the advice of his sagacious friend, Dadabhai refrained from making a public statement. On October 23 Malabari wrote:

Glad to find before going away that Lord Ripon was not neglecting you. He is in active correspondence. Whatever the upshot of it, I trust you will forget your worries in hard work. That is the only way. And whatever you do, in case of difference, think carefully of the effect of your action on the political future of India. You are wiser than I am ever likely to be, but wiser men are sometimes best advised by foolish ones. Keep your spirits anyhow.

His sorely tried friend did hold his soul in peace, but the Finsbury tension grew worse and worse. Dadabhai informed Malabari that the officials of the Party appeared to be too strong for Lord Ripon and that the noble Lord had failed him. "If Lord Ripon fails, all else fails," sighed Malabari.

It was a critical moment; should the election come upon Dadabhai suddenly, and should the two Party organizations oppose him, without his case being put before the electors in good time, there would be no hope of his being heard by the constituency in the excitement of the election. He, therefore, thought he should make a statement to the electors without further delay. Discreetly he decided to send the statement to the electors only and not to the Press lest he should thereby "give rise to an agitation and give a handle to the Unionists for an attack on the Liberal Party."

In this statement, too, he took his stand on justice:

I have nothing to fear or regret. I have not said a word to any of the parties on the other side even to my opponents in Central Finsbury, or to Mr Eve, which any reasonable man would consider blameworthy. . . . I have faith that after this explanation the Electors of Central Finsbury and the British public will give me justice and fair play.

To cut a long story short, the electors did do him justice. At long last, Ford withdrew his candidature rather than split the Party vote. Dadabhai was then left the sole Liberal and Radical candidate, the only claimant to the united support of all the Liberal and Radical organizations in Central Finsbury and of the leading Liberal Party organizations. His views on English politics were well known to the electorate, but in the manifesto he now issued he made it clear that he adopted the entire Newcastle Liberal programme, and mentioned the principal measures for which he stood, including Home Rule for Ireland, Home Rule for London, endowment of the London County Council with full municipal powers; proper application of charitable endowments for the benefit of the people, women to be qualified for seats in the County Council; contribution by owners of property for public permanent improvements; rating of vacant property of land; representative Parish and District Councils; direct popular veto of the liquor traffic; extension of the Factory Acts; free breakfast table; graduated income-tax on incomes above £300 a year, and higher rate of income derived by will, etc., on a sliding scale; inexpensive industrial courts; all labour questions with a view to justice and fair play to labour; and Indian reforms.

Gladstone, Rosebery, Ripon, and Reay were amongst the earliest friends to convey to Dadabhai their gratification that the split in Central Finsbury had been healed and that he had been accepted as the Liberal candidate for the constituency. Richard Eve, too, joined in the felicitations and observed: "I have not had any difference with you. Whatever difference existed was between you and the Liberal Association for Central Finsbury."

The most appreciative and touching letter was Josephine Butler's (June 25):

It is not so much as a mere Liberal that I hope for your election, but because you are one of the most uncompromising friends of womanhood. You have always upheld the necessity of equal laws for men and women, and your moving appeals on several occasions at our meetings have sunk deeply into our hearts. We have at this



moment more than ever painfully the interests of your countrywomen and our fellow-subjects in India, and I hope that our efforts may result before long in a greater measure of legal justice for the women of India. Your clear insight into all that is false and unequal in our British laws regarding women has not been, to my mind, surpassed in any instance, even of our own countrymen experienced in these matters, and your standard of moral excellence for men and women alike, and of the integrity of marriage and the purity of the home, are all that the most convinced Christian could desire in accordance with the ethical teaching of Christ. You may be sure of our prayers for your success.

Among the numerous friends who worked with their heart and soul in the contest on the day of polling, the most conspicuous was His Highness Sir Sayajirao Gackwar, Maharaja of Baroda. Dadabhai's rival being an influential ground landlord in a large portion of the district had carriages galore sent to him by the Marquis of Salisbury and other shining lights of the aristocracy. Poor Dadabhai would have found it a great handicap, had not the Maharaja placed at his disposal twenty coaches. In other ways, too, the enlightened Prince cheered Dadabhai in his uphill task, which was even more Herculean than his eventful Dewanship of Baroda. There was also a large contingent of Indians to work for him; notable among these was Muncherji Bhowmaggree, who, whilst helping Dadabhai, was perhaps fired for the first time with the desire himself to try his luck at a subsequent election. Amongst the British friends, Digby, Keir Hardie, John Burns (now the Right Honorable), James Rowlands, and Griffith were the most prominent.

On Burns Dadabhai depended most for the Labour vote. In February 1891 a statement was publicly made at the Central Finsbury Radical Club that a new organization had been formed with the object of running a Labour candidate. Dadabhai wrote forthwith to Burns (February 9):

I should like to know whether it is so, or whether it is only a confusion of your own efforts. At all events I am sure you will not allow any attempt to disturb me in Central Finsbury.

Burns stood by Dadabhai through thick and thin.

Perhaps those who contributed the most, during the last days of the election, to the triumphant conclusion of the contest were the very obstructors who, whilst Ford was in the field, had done their worst to mar the prospects of success. Their conversion at the eleventh hour was providential, like true Britons they fought tenaciously for him. It was not the grudging negative support of a Party coerced to withdraw its opposition, it was positive and active support. J. Walton, the Chairman of the Central Finsbury Liberal and Radical Association, made most stirring speeches at the demonstrations in Dadabhai's favour on the eve of the election, it was cheering to see Ford himself and his talented wife gracefully espousing the cause of his erstwhile rival.

The most indefatigable women friends, who had canvassed the constituency continuously for three years, were Mrs. Bell and her daughter. It seemed as if the spirit of his friend Major Evans Bell had been helping Dadabhai through the medium of his wife and daughter. Similarly, Charles Bradlaugh, though not alive to bless Dadabhai's candidature, appeared to speak through the mouth of his gifted daughter, Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner. In her speeches she referred to her father's overwhelming devotion to the people of India in such touching terms that they created a profound impression on the audience in favour of the candidate who aspired to represent those people in the House of Commons. Two other women orators, who enlivened the demonstrations on the eve of the election, were Miss Colenso and Mrs. Wynford Philipps, both of whom pleaded the cause of social reform and thrilled the audience with their orations. Florence Nightingale and Josephine Butler, the two heroines of the nineteenth century deeply interested in India, were also pillars of strength. Florence Nightingale was a prisoner in her rooms from illness and overwhelmed with work. She could not render any active assistance on the last days of the election, but she wrote (June 24): "I rejoice beyond measure that you are now the only Liberal candidate for Central Finsbury."

On the other hand, the Conservative organs and the friends of the Conservative candidate did everything possible to create prejudice against Dadabhai. He was, they urged repeatedly, a fire-worshipper, and not a few electors, good Christians as they were, refused to vote for him merely on that ground! One day, Homi Dadina went to Lord Carlisle for a "commendatory letter" to be read at one of the meetings. While he was waiting, Lady Carlisle entered the drawing-room. When Dadina explained the object of his visit, she explained: "But he (Dadabhai) is a fire-worshipper. How can you expect Christians to help a man who worships fire?" It took a long time before Dadina could make her realize that fire was regarded by Parsis merely as a symbol of divinity and that they were as staunch monotheists as Christians. Lord Carlisle, who joined them later, readily lent Dadabhai all his support.

To what extent his antagonists were determined to exploit the myth of the Parsi candidate being a fire-worshipper may be gathered from the outburst of some of the hostile papers immediately after the election. "If the electors of Central Finsbury like to be represented by a fire-worshipping Asiatic," moaned the *Spectator*, "that is their affair, and at all events shows absence of prejudice, but Mr. Naoroji will pose as the Native Member for India. That is not a just pretension."

A retired officer of the Indian Army gave vent to his harrowed feelings in much stronger terms in the *Morning Post*. He called Dadabhai an alien to India and belonging to "a race of mere traders, none of whom ever drew a sword or pulled a trigger either for or against us, a people who, if we left India, would be massacred to a man by the fighting races."

*St. Stephen's Review*, however, consoled itself with the reflection that from the point of view that Dadabhai belonged to a civilized community, his election for Finsbury was not quite so ridiculous as if that unenlightened constituency had sent a Bengali Babu to Parliament. That was the best that could be said for it! This paper, too, had its fling at the so-called fire-worshipper. "Central Finsbury," it added, "should be ashamed

of itself at having publicly confessed that there was not in the whole of the Division an Englishman, a Scotchman, a Welshman, or an Irishman as worthy of their votes as this fire-worshipper from Bombay."

The electors went to the polling booth, on July 6, and, despite all frantic efforts to stir up racial prejudice, recorded a majority of three votes in Dabadhai's favour. He secured 2,959 votes, his opponent, Captain F. T. Penton, 2,956—a very narrow majority, but narrow majorities were no uncommon feature at Central Finsbury elections. At the previous General Election, Captain Penton himself had gained admission to the House of Commons with a majority of only five votes. There was, besides, a special virtue in the narrow majority in favour of Dadabhai—it relieved the voters of the effort to articulate the name Naoroji. They dubbed him "Narrow-Majoritee." For months thereafter the nickname stuck to the Parsi M.P.

The bare announcement of the voting was received with a tumult of applause by the multitude that had assembled near the National Liberal Club. The sky was rent with cheers for "Salisbury's Black Man." "The cheering," says a local report, "might have been heard at St. Paul's on one side and Chelsea Hospital on the other." Another report in the *Leeds Mercury* (July 8), stated "A roar went up from thousands of throats, and it would almost seem from the half-benignant, half-scornful, patronizing tone in which *The Times* hails his appearance as a British legislator, as if the echoes of the demonstration had penetrated Printing House Square."

Dadabhai had now reached the pinnacle of his fame. All the world thought highly of his qualities, but how little does the world usually know of the inner mysteries of electioneering? Much less did it know of the numerous obstacles with which the path of the hero of this election had been strewn; otherwise its admiration of his marvellous faculties and power of endurance and strength would have been infinitely greater.

For weeks together the first Indian M.P. was deluged with torrents of congratulations from friends as well as strangers from

the four quarters of the globe. The enthusiasm in England was almost as great as in India. Speaking at a banquet, on July 23, at the Holborn Restaurant, in celebration of the event, Dadabhai gratefully referred to that pleasing feature of the election. "If one were to judge from the numbers of telegrams and letters I receive from English ladies and gentlemen in different parts of the United Kingdom," he said, "we would suppose that the English people were rejoicing over something that had happened to themselves." The first to express his joy was Gladstone. At a meeting held on July 7, at West Calder, he said: "Lord Salisbury one day spoke in contempt of black men. It is a curious fact that what Lord Salisbury called a black man has just been returned to my great satisfaction."

Among the letters of congratulation that came from abroad there was one from Melbourne from the Scottish National Association of Victoria, a branch of the Scottish Home Rule Association. Along with the letter were sent copies of three resolutions passed by the Association on July 22, congratulating the Home Rule Party upon the victory they had achieved in the General Election and expressing the hope that simultaneously with or immediately following upon the concession of Home Rule to Ireland, a similar measure concerning Scotland would be passed by the British Parliament.

You are (said the Honorary Secretaries) the only non-Scottish M.P., except Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Justin McCarthy, to whom a copy of these resolutions has been sent, and our reason is that the insult offered to our Indian fellow-subjects, known as "the black man" incident, was uttered by Lord Salisbury in Scotland at a meeting presided over by a Scottish peer (Lord Hopetoun), who is now Governor of this Colony. We desire, as Scotsmen, to repudiate Lord Salisbury's abominable sneer and to assure you that we hold out the right hand of fellowship to all our fellow-citizens, irrespective of colour and creed. We hope that, when the opportunity arises, you will support the claims of Scotland to Local National Self-Government, to obtain which is the principal object of this Association. Scotland, with her splendid

history and strongly developed spirit of nationality, is surely worthy of better treatment than to be governed as a mere province of England.

Almost as much as Dadabhai was Central Finsbury overwhelmed by messages of thanks from all parts of India. The whole country was greatly moved by feelings of the deepest gratitude to the English constituency that had returned an Indian to the Imperial Parliament. Such a thing was possible only in a free country like England. The electors had shown that the instincts of political freedom and the fairness of the British public had triumphed. They had given a concrete illustration of the elasticity of the British Constitution and demonstrated, better than all official declarations, the equality of British citizens, wherever born and brought up.

To the romance of Indian history was thus added a thrilling chapter. Hitherto, a Bright, a Fawcett, a Bradlaugh, or a Caine had earned the gratitude of Indian people by strenuous advocacy of their country's cause on the floor of the House of Commons. Now their mantle had fallen on a son of the soil, who was endowed with all the qualities and equipped with all the knowledge required to plead on behalf of his motherland at the bar of that august Assembly.

July 1893 was a month of rejoicing and thanksgiving in India. Meetings were held throughout the country. Of these the Bombay meeting was naturally the most enthusiastic and most representative of the different communities in India. The Princes of India also rejoiced with the populace over the success of Dadabhai. Of these the Maharaja of Baroda, the Thakore Saheb of Gondal, the Maharaja of Bhavnagar, the Rao of Cutch, and the Nawab Saheb of Junagadh were the most conspicuous. Who could have thought, a little while before, that even the bitterest opponents of the Congress would rejoice at this epoch-making event? Yet, to the dismay of the Anglo-Indian cynics, Sir Asman Jah, Prime Minister, and Nawab Fatch Nawaz Jung, Home Secretary, of Hyderabad Deccan, also sent heartfelt congratulations to Dadabhai.

While Central Finsbury was being flooded with messages expressing the gratitude of the Indian people to the electors of that constituency, Dady Cama conveyed his thanks to it in the typical Parsi way. He wrote to the Lord Mayor that the followers of the Prophet Zoroaster were taught to share their joy with others and that as the electors of Central Finsbury had made him happy by giving "his illustrious co-religionist" a seat in the House of Commons, he was carrying forthwith into effect the teachings of the Prophet of Iran by sending to the Lord Mayor a hundred guineas for the poor-box at the Mansion House. The comment of the *City Press* on that somewhat novel communication was: "There are some things amongst the Parsis that we should do well to follow."

Dadabhai's and his countrymen's joy was, however, for the moment, premature. Captain Penton filed a petition, on November 26, demanding a scrutiny. Speaking, six months later, about this petition, at a meeting held in his honour in Bombay, Dadabhai said to the amusement of the audience that all the crimes in the universe had been laid at his door. He was "said to have corrupted east, corrupted west, corrupted north, and corrupted everywhere."

After the satisfactory result of the appeal he could thus afford to speak light-heartedly, but for the time being the petition caused grave anxiety to himself and his friends in England and in India. As a matter of form, election petitions embody all conceivable charges; even so, none could face with equanimity an election appeal with a majority of only three votes in his favour. Even where there might be absolute integrity on the part of the principal, the indiscretion or irregularities of others might convert success into defeat. That danger had to be met in this case. Dadabhai's solicitor was Henry Cobb, of Lincoln's Inn Fields, well up in election business. He was rather uneasy about the irregularities alleged to have been perpetrated by Homi Dadina, one of Dadabhai's helpers on the day of election. A mere student blissfully ignorant of the Corrupt Practices Act, he had at his disposal the twenty imposing coaches lent by the

Maharaja of Baroda and his pockets were jingling with coins to meet contingencies. Being a gay soul, he would not have been true to himself if he had not played the host with the voters and the helpers who fetched them. Some of the workers for Captain Penton went to him and asked for carriages to bring voters. Thinking they were working for Dadabhai, Dadina placed the carriages at their disposal and put some coins in their hands for drink. The carriages returned with voters for Penton.

Dadabhai questioned Dadina and asked him to admit freely whatever he might have done, knowingly or unknowingly. Dadina assured him that besides giving a few shillings for drink to people who had offered to fetch voters, he had not made any payment for any vote. Those were moments of awful anxiety and alarm. Would Dadina's folly snatch away from the Indian M.P. his hard-earned seat?

"Well, Homi," said Dadabhai, "what is done is done. If you are questioned by the other side, tell the truth. Do not hold back anything. I would rather be unseated than see any false defence set up."

Dadina was then closely questioned by Cobb. He gathered from his conversation with the solicitor that his presence in England might create complications. Far better that he should go abroad "on a holiday" than be made to face the artillery of the lawyers on the other side! Without saying a word to anybody, he took the next train to Paris and nobody knew where Dadina was holidaying until the petition was withdrawn. There was an alternate ebb and tide of each candidate's hope and despair during the time the scrutiny was going on. At last, after six months, Captain Penton withdrew the petition, and along with Dadabhai all India heaved a sigh of relief.

The election being confirmed, it was celebrated in London on January 23, 1893, by one of the most enthusiastic meetings ever held in Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell. About two thousand friends and admirers of the Indian M.P., including several leading Members of Parliament and foremost citizens of London, were



present. In the absence of Lord Ripon, owing to illness, R. K. Causton presided.

I may tell you (he said) that a British military officer of distinction, speaking the other day, quite apart from politics, remarked that he believed that in the security of the Indian Empire the election of Mr Naoroji would be more than equivalent to a brigade of infantry. The event is, indeed, unique in that it ushers in a new era in our relations with India. It shows that the claim of Englishmen that they are the pioneers of popular government throughout the world is not a myth but a reality. Dadabhai had gone to Parliament not only to raise his voice on behalf of his Indian fellow-subjects but also on behalf of those who desired progress and civilization in England, and who desired to bring peace, happiness, and contentment to all the people of these realms.

Various addresses were then formally presented to Dadabhai and congratulatory letters and telegrams read. There were also messages thanking the electors of Central Finsbury. These came not only from numerous cities and villages of British India and Indian States, but also from Ceylon, Africa, and South America. T. Wildbore, Treasurer of the Central Finsbury Liberal and Radical Association, then moved that that meeting, accepting from the people of India, there represented, the addresses of thanks to the electors of Central Finsbury, trusted that India, with a direct voice in the Imperial Parliament, might have consideration to all her requirements. In reply Dadabhai observed that new life was being infused into the people of India.

We hope to enjoy the same freedom, the same strong institutions which you in this country enjoy. We claim them as our birth-right as British subjects. We are either British subjects or British slaves. If we are really British subjects, you are honestly bound to give us every one of your institutions as soon as we are prepared to receive them. I have now no doubt from my long knowledge of this country that as soon as the British people begin to understand what we are prepared for, they will be ready to give it.

He thanked all those who had canvassed on his behalf, doing their best to assure the people who thought he was a black man that he was "not really so black" as he had been represented to be! He might have added that Lord Salisbury himself had borne eloquent testimony to this fact by inviting him, a year before, to become a member of the Governing Board of the Imperial Institute, an invitation which he had accepted.

## CHAPTER XXI

### HIS DAILY THOUGHT—INDIA

ELECTION to Parliament was, after all, only a means to an end; the welfare of India was his daily thought. How to bring home to Englishmen the truth about India's pitiable condition, what to do to impress upon British statesmen the gravity of the situation, was Dadabhai's constant concern during all the stress and strain of the seven years' electoral campaign. The British public was ready to learn and beginning to understand, but from that to movement and action was still a long way.

In its early days the East India Association afforded a good platform to stir up criticism and to create a strong impression on the authorities in England. But its direction had gradually passed into the hands of people with not the same enthusiasm for Indian reform. Dadabhai, therefore, turned to some personal friends in the House of Commons for help in carrying on a crusade on behalf of India. The Members really interested in Indian problems were but a score or so at most. Half the number of these were retired civil or military officers, the majority of whom were strongly Conservative, scenting sedition and suspecting disloyalty in every motion for liberalizing the system of administration of India. Only a handful of the other interested members were really progressive and sagacious enough to realize that England's good came only through India's good. Of these, the most ardent and active and the most friendly to Dadabhai were William Wedderburn, W. S. Caine, and Samuel Smith.

Caine had paid more than one visit to India. When he revisited the country in 1888, Dadabhai asked Malabari and Wacha to see that he was freely introduced to Indian leaders of thought and to arrange for him an interesting and instructive tour throughout the country. In the letters which Caine wrote from India to the

English journals, he gave his impressions of the progress made by the cotton industry in India.

The whole Indian cotton trade appears to me to be one of the most prosperous and progressive industries in the world . . . I have met many of the leading spinners during this week, and they are sanguine of the future of their manufacture and believe that in another twenty years India will be able not only to supply herself with all her requirements in cotton cloth and prints, but will be able to compete successfully with Manchester in China and other Eastern markets. Manchester, however, is hard to kill. I venture no opinion of my own, I give the facts only.

To what extent Indians were qualified for some form of self-government was the most important problem which Caine wished to study. The only representative institutions which then existed in India were the municipalities. The opponents of the Congress pointed the finger of scorn at those bodies, imperfect as they were during their infancy, as a warning against any increase in the popular element in the provincial and viceregal councils. With a view to counteracting the mischief done by such detractors Caine took pains to make himself conversant with the working of the municipalities, and whilst appreciating their work generally he paid a glowing tribute to the Bombay Corporation. "I have no hesitation in saying," he asserted, "that both the administration and the public debates of the Bombay Municipality are equal in quality to that of Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, or Glasgow." Dadabhai took special care to see that such favourable impressions of British friends, based on personal observation, were widely circulated in England.

On February 7, 1889, Caine gave his final address in Bombay. What a flutter it caused in the Anglo-Indian dovecot is related in a letter received by Dadabhai from Dadina junior. "He (Caine) spoke very much in favour of the National Congress with a perfectly unbiassed mind. . . . *The Times of India* has entered into a hot discussion with him and advised the Government to take measures against such a seditious member of Parliament."

Another letter, from Dadabhai's son Adi (January 3, 1890),

referred to the visit of Wedderburn, who presided over the Congress of 1889. Adi and his wife and sisters, accompanied by Muncherji Dadina, had called on Wedderburn.

I have not the least doubt (said Adi) that had you been here I would have accompanied you to the Congress, but being not politically inclined I did not go and consequently when we went to Sir William, who informed us that you were in good health, I got a little verbal whipping from him, saying that we should all dabble more or less in politics so as to keep to a certain extent the professional wire-pullers in check. So I assured him that I would most willingly attend the Congress if the people of Mandvi send me as their delegate, which may be expected in "the month of blue moons."

Adi, however, failed to mention what his wife added in her letter concerning this point:

*Sir William explained how all should give a little of their time for the good of their country. Then he laughed and said, "As your father does so much for his country, you may be excused!"*

With his old friend Samuel Smith, too, Dadabhai had been in close contact for a number of years, prompting him and supplying him with ammunition to carry on a campaign on behalf of India on the floor of the House of Commons. In one of his letters (June 1886), Smith said that he had put down an amendment to the Address on the subject of India, as there was no chance of getting a proper discussion on the Budget, and he requested Dadabhai to render any help he could in preparing his case. Immediately he was inundated with Congress reports and Dadabhai's own papers and other literature concerning the grievances of India, with a letter containing the following suggestion:

You may take this opportunity of saying how unjust it is that of all the British subjects we alone have no voice in our affairs and that the fundamental British principle that representation must go with taxation is not allowed us, though it is our birth-



W S CAIN



right as British subjects There is no representation even in the Indian Legislative Councils and there even the financial statement is not discussed at all

Not only to Smith but also to Bradlaugh, Fawcett, and Professor William Hunter he furnished briefs for India. Smith took up the cause in right earnest. On June 22 he wrote to Dadabhai: "I spoke at considerable length on the night of Indian Budget on the grievances of the natives of India, but the House was very empty and the papers gave a poor report" He also contributed articles on India to the *Contemporary Review*. For this he was subjected to hostile criticism from the pen of Sir M. E. Grant Duff (Governor of Madras, 1881-86), whose articles appeared in the *Review* for January and February 1887. Dadabhai was then in Bombay. Smith sent him an S O S from Cannes (February 5).

The late Governor of Madras is very severe in his strictures on me and on my informants being the educated natives of India, and I do hope that you will reply to him. None could do it so well as you and it is most desirable, in the interests of India, to keep up the discussion till the whole truth is elicited

Dadabhai's rejoinder was in the hands of Samuel Smith by the middle of April. It was published in two parts—the first in the August number, and the second in the November number, of the *Review*.

Whether I look to the superficiality and levity of his treatment of questions of serious and melancholy importance to India (said he) or to the literary smartness of off-hand reply which he so often employs in the place of argument, or to the mere sensational assertions which he puts forward as proofs, I cannot but feel that both the manner and matter of the two articles are, in many parts, unworthy of a gentleman of Sir Grant Duff's position and expected knowledge. But what is particularly regrettable is his attitude towards the educated classes, and the sneers he has levelled against higher education itself

The educated classes, he contended, were the powerful chain by which India was becoming more and more firmly linked



with Britain. The natural effect of their education was independence of character, which had ruffled the composure of men like Grant Duff whose careless utterances did incalculable harm both to England and to India.

Coming to the points of dispute, Dadabhai said there were three parties concerned: (1) the British nation, (2) the authorities to whom the Government of India was entrusted, and (3) the people of British India. He had no complaint against the British nation or the British rule. It was against the authorities, or rather against the system of government, which subverted the avowed and pledged policy of the British nation.

The first important issue was: What was Britain's policy towards India? When Indians were in their political infancy, when they had not uttered any complaint, nor demanded any rights, the British nation, of their own accord and merely from their own sense of duty towards the millions of India and to the world, had deliberately declared what their policy should be towards the people of India—the policy of justice and of the advancement of humanity. Was this policy honestly laid down? Was it intended to be honestly and honourably carried out, or was it a lie and a delusion, meant only to deceive India and the world? The pledge had been given with grace, unasked, but the authorities, to whom its performance had been entrusted, did not do their duty. Then came the troublous days of the Mutiny. Did England say to India: "You have proved unworthy of the pledge, and I withdraw it?" "No." She once more solemnly proclaimed to the world the same pledge in a more complete form. It would be an insult to the British nation if anyone "for a moment entertained the shadow of a doubt with regard to the honesty of those pledges."

The second important question was the poverty of India. Samuel Smith had stated: "The first and deepest impression made upon me by this second visit to India is a heightened sense of the poverty of the country." What was Sir Grant Duff's reply to it? First, a sneer at the educated classes; next, an extract from an address of some good people of the town of Bezwada,

acknowledging that at one stroke the mouths of the hungry dying people had been "filled with bread"; and then, "off-hand questions and assertions" to the effect that the country was visibly increasing in wealth. Fortunately, Mr. Grant Duff had already replied to Sir Grant Duff. In 1873, during the debate on the opium question, Mr. Duff had asked Sir William Lawson, the Radical Member of the House of Commons for Carlisle, this remarkable question: "Would it be tolerable that to enforce a view of morality which was not theirs, which had never, indeed, been accepted by any large portion of the human race, we should grind an already poor population to the very dust with new taxation?"

Then followed a vivid exposition of the extreme poverty of India and observations on the actual condition of the country with an array of official and non-official evidence which Dadabhai had at the tip of his fingers.

One of the amazing statements made by Grant Duff was that no country on the face of the earth was governed so cheaply as British India. That, said Dadabhai, was a fiction. The burden of taxation was "more than double that of the enormously rich England."

It is not of choice that Government take only six shillings per head. On the contrary, it is always longing, ever moaning and using every possible shift to squeeze out more taxation if it can.

By all means make British India capable of paying even twenty shillings per head (if not fifty shillings per head, like England) for revenue, without oppression and misery. . . . Let us have such results, instead of tall talk and self-complacent assertions.

Grant Duff had referred to the absorption of enormous quantities of gold and silver and to hoarding. The amount of bullion retained had to be distributed over a vast country and a vast population. It amounted to a "wretched provision" of sixpence half-penny per head per annum received for all possible wants, social, commercial, and political. Did England mean to say that Englishmen or Englishwomen might sport as many trinkets and ornaments as they liked, but that their wretched fellow-subjects

in India had no business or right to give a few shillings worth of trinkets to their wives or daughters?

"We have stopped war, we are stopping famine. How are the ever-increasing multitude to be fed?" Was it not a sweeping remark?

What you are doing (said Dadabhai) is to starve the living to save the dying. Make the people themselves able to meet the famine without misery and deaths, and then claim credit that you are stopping famine.

How were the ever-increasing multitude to be fed? The answer was simple enough. The British statesmen of 1833 and 1858 had given it in the clearest and most emphatic manner. What was it that the Indian National Congress had asked? Simply the "conscientious fulfilment" of the pledges of 1833 and 1858—the pivot upon which all Indian problems turned.

The labour spent by Dadabhai on those two articles bore rich fruit. Writing to Hume in December 1887, he says "Friends now begin to ask me after reading my papers and those of Sir Grant Duff what I wanted, and that I should lay down some practical proposals. This, then, is a stage gained."

Hyndman, though not in the House, was no less helpful than Cane or Samuel Smeth. He, however, differed from Dadabhai as regards ways and means. The situation in India appeared to him to be even more desperate than to Dadabhai. There was a growing feeling among people of his way of thinking that both England and India were on the verge of a serious crisis. It seemed to them that the only hope lay in a general shock.

When Dadabhai was in India in the year 1884, there was a constant interchange of views on current politics between the two friends. In one of the letters (August 21), Hyndman said

I always told you, you remember, that little could be done for India until we had a revolution here. Sir Louis Mallet is of the same mind. That revolution I have been steadily preparing for and we Socialists are now the only growing party in England. Throughout the country, especially in the great industrial centres,

we have little knots of earnest, enthusiastic men who gradually force our views to the front. We make no attempt whatever to touch or to influence the House of Commons, which we consider to be quite "played out" as an active force; but we go direct to the people and stir them to think of the historical, economical, and social causes of their enslavement. The existing parties, bent as they are merely on the principles, or want of principles of the trading, capitalist, profit-mongering classes, are rapidly becoming contemptible. Neither Tory, Whig, Liberal, or Radical feel any confidence in the future. Their industrial crises and the growing discontent among our people are quite beyond the power of the commercial or labouring school of politicians to handle, because they do not understand their causes. This agitation about the House of Lords also which is now going on is, at least, but a superficial business. The mass of the workers are beginning to see that agitations supported by capitalists—the smallest and meanest class which has ever held power in any country—cannot bring any good to them. As our literature spreads, they will know this more and more. Each day that passes brings us recruits from among the abler and more far-seeing men. Thus all looks more favourable than I had hoped, and the grave economical depression is helping us on, notwithstanding the deplorable ignorance of our people as a body, and the brutal lying of the capitalist Press.

Thus being so, we have resolved to take up the Indian question and to work it thoroughly so far as we can. India has unfortunately little interest for the people, but we can get at them by showing that the same class—the capitalists—which is ruining you ruins also our own workers. I send you our journal, now more than six months old, by this post—*Justice*.

I will try to write again soon. Meanwhile rest assured that the social revolution here is coming on quietly. Every moment you must *help us*—don't forget that there is no hope for you unless we move here and your movement helps our movement.

Dadabhai expressed his pleasure and gratitude that his friend's interest in India was "still as warm as ever." Hyndman's talk of a revolution, however, did not seem to have evoked any enthusiasm in the Indian patriot to whom constitutionalism was the very

breath of life. His mind was at that moment greatly agitated by the outrageous conduct of the European community in India towards Lord Ripon and its open hostility to Indians; therefore, instead of speculating on the prospects of a revolution, he unburdened his mind on that incident and treated the Irish rebel to a sermon on moderation!

Now that the mask is openly thrown aside and it is clear that Native interests shall not be promoted and kept subordinated to English interests, and now that the whole force of English opinion and action in India is brought to bear upon any right-minded Viceroy or Governor to abuse, harass and hamper him, without a strong opinion in England and a strong Secretary of State, our future looks gloomy. The uproar the English Press raises here and the help the correspondent of *The Times* gives to it by wiring it to England and the other different fair or foul means [words omitted, being illegible, ink faded] is something awful. I wonder whether Nemesis is approaching faster and some catastrophe alone can mend matters.

In reading your "Ruin of India" in *Justice*, I thought it would be better if you avoided such positive statements as "an insurrection is certain within the next few months or years." The opponents take hold of such assertions, and if the events predicted do not take place, discredit is thrown on the whole movement. Especially, in the present circumstances of the fury and outrageous conduct of the Anglo-Indian world, we are obliged . . . in contrast with them, to adopt moderation in our language and effort. We cannot and should not show that we are as bad as they are. We should show that we have more respect for law and authority. Our hope now, however, is mostly in England.

In the next letter, which followed on October 3, Dadabhai took up the question of the Services and the drain. After a long statement, he said: "I do not see at present any immediate practical way in which the bleeding drain can be stopped. Think over this matter carefully and pray do what you can and let me know your views."

Hyndman accordingly kept hammering away, whenever he got a chance, but he could never reconcile himself to Dadabhai's

modest methods of asserting India's claims. "The time has gone for imploring, if ever it existed," he tells Dadabhai, three years later. He would like to see "a great stir." It was, however, still too early for the Indian patriot to take the cue from a British revolutionary. All that he could do, for the moment, was to interest as many friends in England as possible in the Indian question and to enlist their support in making the agitation over the British-made catastrophe in India as powerful as possible. Their advice and assistance were a source of great comfort to him in his uphill work.

From Martin Wood also Dadabhai received helpful suggestions from time to time. Writing from Beaumont Crescent, London (January 22, 1885), on the question of the poverty of India, this ever-helpful friend wrote:

Depend upon it, nothing is needed so much as to convince the English public and especially our Radical friends of the great money value of India to England. For lack of that being seen and known to all, our pleas on behalf of India go for little. They fall back on the superstition that India has cost England untold millions and then, when that is disproved, they fall back on—"ah, but it will do some day," and thus a feeling of hopelessness and distaste to Indian topics is engendered which is, believe me, the greatest difficulty you have to contend with.

Dadabhai wrote, in reply, from Bombay (February 12):

It is quite true that the great need is to convince the English public of the great money value of India to England. If you keep up writing short paras. for the *Indian Spectator*, these coming from England will have some effect both here and in England.

Then he dwelt on what he believed to be the practical remedy—"Simultaneous examinations for all the Services both in India and England. When this justice is done, all will take its natural course. England will have washed out the only black spot of injustice which now darkens its otherwise bright shield."

Josephine Butler was one of the earliest friends to take active interest in the struggle for India's freedom.

I received all your papers (said she, December 9, 1886) and I am slowly studying them. . . . The subject is of extreme interest to me. Meanwhile I speak of the subject whenever I have opportunity. I have had a correspondence with Mr. Edward Russell, editor of the *Liverpool Daily Post* (Liberal), and he is anxious for me to write an article for his paper on the subject of the reforms required for India. . . . Mr. Russell desires me not to draw any moral lesson from the matter in the cause of Ireland, as Liverpool is so prejudiced, but I do not think I can obey any such condition, as I must point out that it is the ignorance of our English public men, rather than any ill-will, which has prevented us doing justice to Ireland; and the same thing will act fatally towards India

Then she put various questions to Dadabhai:

(1) Your opinion as to the original conquest of India by the English—the morality connected therewith.

(2) How does the Imperial rule contrast with that of the East India Company? Was the change favourable or not?

(3) The Indian Mutiny—can you tell me what you consider chiefly led up to it?

I must tell you (she added) that since I was quite young, my own convictions have been very strong that great iniquities were perpetrated from the very first by the English in their conquest of India. A few incidents of a domestic nature which came to my knowledge twenty years ago made me think that there was a great rankling sore and that the English were accumulating judgments on their heads.

Later, she wrote:

I have just completed a small work on *Government by Police*. You will find in it an allusion to the grave question of India—another folly of our Parliament in not considering it.<sup>1</sup>

Thus was Dadabhai adding continually to his allies in the campaign against the colossal ignorance and apathy of the British public concerning Indian affairs.

<sup>1</sup> In this book she says India is "suffering from chronic poverty, recurring and devastating famines, and a police system thoroughly corrupt and intolerably oppressive, not to speak of Imperially-imposed horrors of compulsory and licensed prostitution, the drink traffic, etc." (pp 5-6)

After the inauguration of the Indian National Congress, India and Congress were indissolubly associated in Dadabhai's daily thought. He spoke about them as though they were synonymous terms. What was good for one was good for the other; what did harm to one harmed the other too. The voluminous correspondence that he carried on during this period with his colleagues and others bears ample testimony to his deep and abiding devotion to the work of this national organization and constant and touching concern for its growth and stability. Indeed, whilst perusing his letters, written during the stirring days of electioneering, one wonders which was uppermost in his mind—election or Congress. Not a week passed without letters and clippings from journals pouring in from India, giving him the minutest particulars concerning the infant institution, or without letters going out from him to various friends in India containing his views, suggestions, and exhortations to save it from harm and to insure its healthy growth. Scarcely a day passed when he was not speaking or writing to British friends, sending articles to newspapers, or addressing British audiences about the Congress, which he introduced to them as "the child of the British rule." These epistles give one an idea of the burning passion of the man for his country and of his daily thought, daily conversation, and daily plans for freeing his motherland from her state of subjection. Incidentally, they call to mind several obscure but interesting episodes in the early history of the Congress.

*Dadabhai to Malabari*

*January 30, 1887.*

SIR W. Hunter takes a kindly and lively interest in the Congress and intends to write to disprove the statement that Mahomedans do not join the Congress. *The Times* correspondent from Calcutta grossly misrepresents everything. . . . The Congress is exciting much interest here and, if it is carefully and perseveringly continued, will do a great good in creating a permanent and effective interest in India in this country.

How great an interest Congress was really exciting in England



about this time, due to Dadabhai's single-handed but gigantic propaganda, is evident from the following extracts from some of the letters received by him concerning the proceedings of the Calcutta Congress over which he had presided. By wide distribution of Congress literature he had succeeded remarkably well in eliciting the sympathy and support of a large number of people in England.

*Sir John Budd Phear<sup>1</sup> to Dadabhai*

*July 7, 1887.*

I wish very much that I could have been personally present at this great national gathering. The event is most significant and instructive, and I trust that the lessons deducible from it will be rightly apprehended and understood by the governing classes in this country. As to this, however, I am not very sanguine. Those whose influence is at this time paramount in controlling the Government are the jingo classes of the people, admirers of liberty and right in all wherein they are themselves concerned, but ever ready to over-ride and assert authority whenever their own will is disputed by those over whom they are able to domineer. A crucial example of this is the treatment which the Irish question is receiving at the hands of the present House of Commons. From the columns of *The Times*, you may judge how the English "classes" look upon the political aspirations of the Indian people. And I have no hope that these can be realized without more than one repetition of struggles of the Ilbert Bill type. But, of course, the cause of the people must prevail ultimately; and the sooner our home democracy learns its power and exercises it, the better will it be for at least the Indian portion of the Empire.

*Robert Pedlar to Dadabhai*

*August 16, 1887.*

The subject is one of the deepest interest and importance for the future welfare of Britain as well as of India. . . . I shall place the Report (of the Congress) in the Reading Room of our Liberal Club (Perth).

<sup>1</sup> Retired Judge of the Calcutta High Court. Author of *The Aryan Village*.

*G. J. Day to Dadabhai**August 16, 1887.*

It is extremely difficult in Indian affairs to know how far to encourage volunteering, it would be most disastrous to England to find a fresh Indian Mutiny spring up and, at the same time, it is most illiberal to prevent by force a people fit to govern themselves from so doing, officering the volunteer forces with Englishmen might do some good, crushing a martial spirit out of a people is a great wrong. We as a nation in our early Roman age suffered terribly from it, and your country would suffer in like manner.

*The Rev. Fred. Trestrail to Dadabhai**January 3, 1888*

The enthusiasm so manifest astonished me. A people hitherto so quiet and impassive to be roused to such energy seems like life from death. I trust this grand debate will put to shame those English residents in India who are so apt to treat her people with scorn and contempt, as if they were an inferior race. Against this spirit I have vehemently protested ever since I had, as Secretary of the Baptist Mission, to do with India.

Within a short time a cousin of Hume, Robert Muller, M.D., Surgeon-Major on the Retired List of the Bombay Army, became a supporter of the Congress. In a letter to Fram Desai, dated December 3, he wrote

Will you please tell your uncle (Dadabhai) that I am the 2nd cousin of Mr. Allan Octavian Hume, C.B. (late Secretary to the Government of India in the Agricultural Department), that until Mr. Charles Forjett sent me some copies of the *Homeward Mail* I did not know anything about the Indian Congress—that if there be an Englishman more than another who considers the Government of India to be “a Despotism”—*I am that man!* And if he will please to send me all the papers connected with the movement, he may find me to be one of the most energetic supporters of the movement.

*Dadabhai to Wacha**December 23, 1887.*

I think it would be better to confine the Congress to the natives of India in its wide sense of including domiciled Europeans and Eurasians. It would be better not to mix up the European element with it.

*Dadabhai to Malabari**December 15, 1887.*

In the present number of the *Indian Spectator* you have three times hit the political reformers, "who are always for equality between themselves and the English." . . . Now, my dear fellow, what an amount of unnecessary mischief you are doing. By all means fight for the merits of your cause (social reform), but why unnecessarily discredit and discourage other important movements? One thing you may remember, that no people who are politically debased will ever be, and ever have been, socially high. It is the political elevation which will give that back-bone and stamina, that manliness which would give strength and courage to carry social reforms. . . . I do beseech you to consider the matter carefully.

*October 19, 1888*

Now that the Congress will have a hard fight, I fully trust you will give it your most unflinching and strongest support. On such an occasion we must sink all our small differences. The *Indian Spectator* must take a prominent and marked share in the struggle. . . . No half-hearted work will do at present. Assure Hume that you will do all you can to support the Congress. He feels somewhat disappointed with you. He is our best friend. Give him every assurance and help you can. We cannot do less both in gratitude to him as well as for the sake of the great cause now at stake.

*March 23, 1890*

I have been feeling much depressed by the extracts from the *Indian Spectator*, sent by the Calcutta correspondent of *The Times*, against the Congress.

*Dadabhai to Wacha**December 20, 1888.*

I have been much distressed about the views some Parsis are taking that we should dissociate ourselves from the Hindus and Mahomedans. Nothing could be more suicidal. We are India's, and India is our mother-country, and we can only sink or swim with, and as, Indians. If we break with the Indians, our fate will be that of the crow in peacock's feathers. The English will in no time pluck out those feathers. I shall be glad if you have taken many Parsis with you

*January 28, 1889.*

I am sorry about the opposition (to the Congress) of some Parsis . . . The *Rast Goftar* is my greatest distress—the instrument that I had so fondly cherished (in the hope that it) would be for the progress of India and showing how thoroughly the Parsis are faithful to the land of their birth and desirous to repay some of the debt to their asylum by doing whatever little good they can to promote the happiness and prosperity of its children.

*January 17, 1890*

I hear from Behramji (Malabari) that the Parsi opposition was faint and isolated. This is good news to me for the sake of the Parsis themselves.

*February 14, 1890.*

I am glad there were 36 Parsi delegates. . . . By numbers, merely, the Parsis can have only one to 2,500 delegates.

*Dadabhai to Hume**January 5, 1888.*

It is desirable that Native States should be allowed to take an interest in, and help, the Congress and even, if they choose, to find delegates. The Native States have their own wants and grievances, and a body like the Congress and other public associations can alone take up political questions. . . . A solidarity of this kind between all the people of India is a thing to be desired. The interests of the Native States are intimately connected with those of the subjects of British India. Any improvement in Native

States is a gain to all India, and the very success of Native States will by comparison shame and expose the failures in the British system. We must carry the Native Princes completely with us. It will add much to our strength. The very fact that Native States and Princes take an interest in the Congress will in itself give weight and consideration to the Congress in the opinion of the people here

*Dadabhai to Wacha*

*February 9, 1888.*

My stay with Sir W Hunter has been of some good in that he has seen more clearly than before the necessity of larger admission of natives into the Services. He will most probably write something to create greater sympathy for the Congress among the English public . . . He has left a hopeful impression upon me that he means well. I feel a little anxious about the next Congress. Sir Syed Ahmed will move Heaven and Earth to thwart the Congress.

*Dadabhai to Malabari*

*March 2, 1888*

It will, indeed, be a good thing to bring about some reasonable understanding with the Mahomedan opponents. This split will retard our progress very much, indeed. There are difficulties enough to contend against the Anglo-Indians. "God help India" is true, but we must go on doing what we can.

*April 18, 1888*

I hope Mr Hume will be able to bring round Syed Ahmed and prevent the opposition to the Congress. The disunion among ourselves will do us very great harm. Here, interest in India is growing gradually, but this split will check it very much.

What was the opposition to the Congress and what sort of a split was it that it had become a regular nightmare to Dadabhai? During the year 1888 there was an outbreak of anti-Congress fever of a virulent type throughout India among the Anglo-Indian and Muhammadan communities. Dadabhai was referring

to that almost forgotten chapter in the early history of the Congress. If Allan Hume might be called the father of the Congress, the Marquis of Dufferin was the god-father. Not only did he, as Viceroy of India, welcome its formation, but he also advised Hume not to restrict its scope to agitation on the social side of Indian life, as was Hume's original idea, but to widen its scope and definitely to aim at the political education of the people. He even went so far as to recognize the movement by inviting the delegates to the second Congress, held in the following year in Calcutta under the presidentship of Dadabhai, as distinguished guests to a garden party at Government House. His example was followed by Lord Connemara, the Governor of Madras, at the time of the third Congress. There were other provincial Governors, such as Lord Reay in Bombay, and many officials, who also approved of the idea of having a sort of constitutional opposition to the Government of the day.

Soon after the Madras Congress, however, the bureaucracy fell foul of the movement. The growth of the infant Hercules had alarmed officialdom. To the Anglo-Indian community also it seemed to spell subversion of the established order of things, and some Parsis and Muhammadans, too, took fright at the outcry that the Congress aimed at transferring the Government of India from the Crown to a "Native Parliament," in other words, at the substitution of Hindu for British *raj*.

Those who were against the Congress found a strange ally in the report of the Madras session of the Congress itself. To this report were appended two pamphlets, *A Congress Catechism* by Veera Raghavachariar, and *A Conversation between Moulvi Fariduddin* (a pleader of a district called *Hakikatabad*) and one *Rambuksh* (a headman of *Kambakhtpur*), showing by a parable the evils of absentee landlordism, howsoever benevolent, and urging that the way to escape the tyranny of a despotic Government is to seek a representative one such as that for which the Congress was contending. Thousands of copies of both pamphlets in various vernaculars were circulated freely. The hostile organs read in them nothing but revolt and quoted passages from them

to show that the Congress was fast becoming an engine for sedition.

Pamphleteering was not, however, the sole sin of the Congress. Special efforts were made by its leaders to induce Muhammadans to join. The appeal to his co-religionists made by Badruddin Tyabji, as President of the Madras Congress, was followed by active propaganda in Urdu all over the country. A Muhammadan, named Bhimji, toured the provinces enlisting Muslim support. This was a real danger in the eyes of the bureaucracy, more unnerving than all the patriotic froth of Congress speakers and writers. How could Government sit with folded hands when they saw good Muslims walking lightly into the Congress trap? Official and non-official influences were, therefore, at work to make the Muhammadan subjects of the Crown see through the "seditious" movement and to inflame the whole community against the attempt to introduce a Hindu *raj* fatal to its interests.

The worst "crime" of the Congress, however, was the agitation carried on in England by Dadabhai, in the name of the Congress, on behalf of the people of India. He had succeeded in enlisting the sympathy and support of a man like William Hunter in the Congress cause. He had openly declared that the political forces represented by the Congress were so great that the British Government, if it sought to thwart them, would break itself in the attempt. Dadabhai's daily distribution of Congress literature and his daily appeal to the strong sentiments and cherished principles of justice inherent in the English race considerably influenced English opinion in favour of the national movement. For Anglo-India that was the most disastrous phase of the agitation. Already, no less an authority than Gladstone had declared that the capital agent in finally determining the question whether the British power in India was or was not to continue, would be the will of the 240 millions of people who inhabited the country. "It would not do for us," he warned his countrymen, "to treat with contempt, or even with indifference, the rising aspirations of this great people."

There was a clamour in Anglo-Indian circles that the Congress should be checked from speaking on behalf of India and misleading the British people. Writers like Theodore Beck went so far as to suggest that the time had arrived to use once more the iron hand in the velvet glove, and to put down this kind of agitation. The officials, however, resorted to another device. In their opinion the best way to kill the Congress was to have countrywide demonstrations against it. There were the numerous Islamia Anjumans ready to take the lead. Besides, several anti-Congress organizations had already been set on foot specifically for the purpose. There was the United Indian Patriotic Association, of which Sir Syed Ahmed was the Secretary, there was also the British Indian Association of Oudh, ready to give the Congress a bad name and hang it. They all combined and organized public meetings and hostile demonstrations in different parts of India, denouncing the Congress and challenging its right to speak on behalf of the people of the country. They also issued tracts and pamphlets, subsidized journals, and took special care to send anti-Congress literature to England for the information of Members of Parliament, English journals, and the people of the United Kingdom. With funds lavishly placed in its hands, the so-called Patriotic Association was the most active in carrying on such agitation. It issued several pamphlets, one of which was entitled "Showing the Seditious Character of the Indian National Congress and the opinions held by eminent Natives of India who are opposed to the Movement." Theodore Beck was the editor. Among the avowed contributors were some "Rajahs," intellectually cyphers, unable to write a single page of good English. There were, no doubt, able men too, such as Syed Ahmed and Syed Hosain Belgrami, but they were both tainted by a very powerful communal bias. The most important names on the list of opponents of the Congress were those of the Nizam of Hyderabad and Nawab Sir Salar Jung.

Such were the men who were behind the opposition which made Dadabhai very apprehensive about the future of the Congress. The clouds, however, soon dispersed. Despite the furious



cannonade of inimical criticism the Congress forged ahead, and the so-called patriotic associations found an early grave.

*Dadabhai to Wacha*

*September 21, 1888.*

Let the Mahomedans go ahead. This development of a new force will ultimately prove of use to India. It is good that they are roused to some activity.

*July 27, 1888.*

I hope you will be able to do something about Digby's proposed Agency (for officially representing the Congress in England). He is the best man we can have for the purpose and without some such worker here our labours will not fructify rapidly enough. . . . He has time as well as energy and knowledge.

*August 31, 1888.*

I hope that Telang, Mehta, and others will seriously take this matter into consideration. All this means money, and money must be found; for a time, self-sacrifice of a few becomes necessary.

Ever since the inauguration of the Congress, Dadabhai had been pressing on his colleagues in India the need for establishing a political agency to represent officially the Congress in England and to awaken the British public to a sense of the wrongs of India. The cost involved was a deterrent factor. Dadabhai volunteered in 1887 to act as Agent to the Congress, without remuneration, but even the funds for other expenses for propaganda could not be found. He, therefore, did what his own industry and limited resources rendered possible. Digby, however, took up the question earnestly and put forward a clear-cut scheme which led to an agency being set up, in the following year, with an office in Craven Street, Strand, under his personal direction. It served not only as the office of Congress in London but also did for unofficial India what the India Office was doing for official India, as regards presentation of Indian affairs to Parliament and the country. Its rooms became the recognized repository of infor-

mation concerning India. The Gazette of India and the Gazettes of subordinate Governments, Blue Books relating to India and principal Anglo-Indian and Indian newspapers were filed there. Everything was freely rendered available to all persons interested in Indian affairs. Relations were established with the associations and organizations of both the great political parties in Britain, and a systematic and determined attempt was made to arouse British interest and to enlist British effort in Indian affairs.

The Agency freely circulated 10,000 copies of the report of the third Congress and many thousand copies of speeches and pamphlets among all the newspapers in the United Kingdom, members of both Houses of Parliament, various political organizations and leading public men. Huge posters, calling attention to Indian grievances, were printed and put up throughout the United Kingdom, and handbills were distributed at numerous meetings. Excellent propaganda was thus carried on by Digby under the general supervision of Dadabhai until the British Committee of the Congress was formed and associated with the Agency, in July 1889, with Wedderburn as Chairman.

*Dadabhai to Wacha*

*August 10, 1888*

I shall be glad to see that the efforts made by Government to discourage Higher Education will awaken the people to the necessity of helping themselves. Congress has now become a subject of debate in Parliament.

*Dadabhai to Malabari*

*October 5, 1888.*

I am not much afraid of Sir Syed Ahmed's opposition. No doubt, political Agents will be privately putting pressure upon the Chiefs to help them. But the cause is bad and must sooner or later collapse, unless our own friends turn traitors and a division among ourselves ruin the Congress. Upon the whole, the feeling here is in favour of it. We shall now have a far more heavy struggle about the Services than we have had hitherto.

*Dadabhai to Wacha**November 16, 1888.*

The opposition to the Congress is doing it incalculable good and will add much to its triumph and usefulness. . . . The (questions of the) Services and Representation they (leaders of the Congress) must stick to most earnestly. Both are immensely important, but the latter without the former will be a burden.

*November 25, 1888.*

Work steadily on your side, take good care about the important subjects—the Services and simultaneous examinations.

*November 30, 1888.*

We cannot afford to let this great question (Services) flag in the least. If the Congress achieve this one reform only, it will have conferred the greatest benefit on India.

*December 20, 1888.*

At the Congress all leading men must meet. I wish Telang and Pherozeshah to be there. I wonder why Kabraji and Bhownaggee should be against the Congress. . . .

*January 11, 1889.*

What a relief to me that the Congress has been so successful! . . . I do not despair that Sir Syed Ahmed will also come over like Raja Bhawan Prasad, whatever is his present attitude. Events have so shaped themselves that neither Dufferin's attack nor Colvin's correspondence did much mischief—on the contrary some good.

*January 18, 1889.*

This is a new epoch in the history of England and India—the exact bicentenary of the Revolution of 1688–89 to the very months November to February. If the Congress goes on discreetly, there is every chance of its complete success. But moderation is very much needed indeed. . . . Sir Lepel Griffin has attacked me in *The Times*. Sir R. Watkin has attacked the Congress as having Russian gold. Opposition and misrepresentation are thus progressing. Our moderation will overcome all.

*February 8, 1889.*

Mr. Digby is arranging to see all prominent statesmen and I have no doubt his utterances will add to the strength of the Congress. Mr. Gladstone having once expressed himself so strongly and emphatically, we may look forward for better results. . . . Above all, therefore, we should never forget moderation and quiet, but firm and steady work. We are still in the speaking stage. When that is carried on with discretion and temperateness, action and good result will soon follow in due natural course. We have to go through all the usual ailments of infancy and childhood. We have just got our two teeth out and may be able to digest more solid food.

*March 1, 1889.*

I have got many invitations to address on India, but am obliged to decline as I have always to be ready for any call from Central Finsbury. I wish to make a tour of all the towns to address on India and make the Congress a familiar topic and an institution deserving and claiming support from all Englishmen.

*Dadabhai to Malabari*

*May 20, 1889.*

It would be desirable at the next Congress . . . to thank Mr. Smith and his supporters for their kind interest in India. Every little or great success achieved here in Parhamment must be well acknowledged. A good echo from India of what is done here will have a good effect in inciting further action.

*Dadabhai to Wacha*

*May 31, 1889.*

Do not feel annoyed at Mr. Hume. . . . We must not forget what we owe him . . . If he writes to me twice as angrily or unreasonably as he has written to you, I would simply say, "My dear friend, there is some misapprehension on your part," and in a kind way give him the facts. Trust him as one with whose scoldings we must put up as we would do of an elder brother or father. We cannot repay him adequately for what he has done and is doing for us.

August 16, 1889.

A Madras should be asked to preside over the Congress deliberations this year. I do not approve of the idea of there being a permanent President.

*Dadabhai to Malabari*

December 20, 1889.

I read in the *Indian Spectator* that there was an idea of making the Congress quinquennial, and I wrote my views against it in Dinsha's letter. Soon after, I learnt from Mr. Digby that Mr. Hume had contradicted this rumour and I was glad.

*Dadabhai to Wacha*

February 7, 1890.

*India* is estimated to work with a deficit of about £300. We shall have here a very active year, this one, to be sure, in Indian matters.

It was, in fact, a memorable year in the history of Indian Reform. Dadabhai had been constantly reminding his friends in India that the power to introduce reforms was entirely in the hands of the British people and the British Government, and asking them to send frequent delegations to England to convince the British people that the Congress demands were just and fair. He was equally enthusiastic in inducing British statesmen to go out in large numbers to India, to make the acquaintance of Indians, to study their character, to learn their aspirations, to show sympathy for their just demands, and to prove by their own example that the British conscience was still as sound as ever.

Following his advice, the Congress executive in India sent to England, during the summer of 1890, a delegation consisting of Surendranath Banerjea, R. N. Mudholkar, Allan Hume, and Eardley Norton, to tour the country and to appeal to the British public, on behalf of the unrepresented millions of India, to support the Congress in its demand for reform in the administration of their country. The meetings they addressed were well

attended; in every case the audience manifested great interest in the reform proposals. Resolutions were enthusiastically adopted at several meetings in favour of the reforms, particularly for a system of representative government, and petitions were sent to the House of Commons praying for the acceptance of the Congress scheme for Council Reform. The most active and also the most eloquent member of the delegation was Banerjea. His powerful oratory excited unusual interest. Dadabhai, as an Indian resident in England, was also a welcome speaker. His services on this occasion were specially recognized by the British Committee in their resolution eulogizing the work accomplished by the delegates. Perhaps the most interesting feature of this platform campaign was the series of lectures delivered in different parts of England by Bradlaugh on Indian questions.

*Dadabhai to Wacha*

December 10, 1890.

I hope the Congress will pass off successfully. Its importance and necessity increase every day. I am very sorry, indeed, the *Maratha* is playing in our opponents' hands. Such are always the difficulties of every great movement. We must surmount them.

*Dadabhai to Malabari*

March 21, 1890.

Sir W. Wedderburn gave an address last night on India at Toynbee Hall under the auspices of the University Settlement at the East End of London. It was very well and sympathetically received. One Mr. Thomson presented the opposition view of Sir Syed Ahmed's party, and I replied to him.

*Dadabhai to Wacha*

August 29, 1890.

The more you can get Europeans of influence on your side as Presidents taking active part, the less will be the cry that your object was revolutionary and anti-British. Still, it would be desirable to have interspersions of Indian Presidents.

*January 30, 1891.*

I am so glad Congress passed off successfully, but a grievous loss in Bradlaugh's death. . . .

*February 27, 1891.*

The projected delegation of 100 members of the Congress to London will do much good. . . .

*July 3, 1891.*

Sir William asks: "Why does Mr. Wacha write on such horribly heavy papers? He will ruin himself in postage."

*Dadabhai to Hume*

*October 14, 1891.*

The Congress meetings should not be stopped. Such an action will put back India's progress a generation, or at least for years . . . You have already achieved a great deal in rousing up the people. Don't give them up now.

*Dadabhai to Wacha*

*December 23, 1891.*

Hume is discouraged for want of funds. It will be disastrous to India if he gives us up.

*Dadabhai to M. B. Nam Joshi*

*December 10, 1891*

I need not tell you with what grief I read your opposition to the Congress. From you, who have been one of its supporters and workers from its very birth! What is the matter? Can we afford to be so divided against ourselves and can India ever progress under such circumstances? Have we not difficulties and obstacles enough that we create more of our own? Poor India!

*Dadabhai to Wacha*

*April 8, 1892*

The Congress Committee prepared a rather strong resolution and sent it to *The Times* with a letter.

I am distressed to have had to sign that letter after what Hume had done for us.

*April 14, 1892.*

We cannot but expect that our opponents will make capital out of Hume's letters.

These references to Hume's letters and the resolution repudiating his views need elucidation. On February 16, 1892, Hume issued a circular letter addressed to Congressmen, marked private and confidential, which came to be published to the consternation of the writer and his colleagues. The burden of the communication was that the existing system of administration in India was not only pauperizing the people, but also inevitably preparing the way for "one of the most terrible cataclysms in the history of the world." The people were patient, mild, and humble, but so were the people of France only ten years before they rose and murdered their Sovereign and practically the bulk of the better classes. It was Hunger and Misery, those great leaders and teachers, that changed at last, apparently in a day, that crowd of sheep into an army of wolves. To Hume, therefore, it appeared as certain as night follows day that a terrible rising must evolve, sooner or later, out of this state of affairs. He, therefore, warned the people, particularly the rich and the well-to-do:

Do not fancy that Government will be able to protect you or itself. No earthly power can stem an universal agrarian rising in a country like this. My countrymen will be as men in the desert, vainly struggling for a brief space, against the simoon. Thousands of the rioters may be killed, but to what avail, when there are millions on millions who have nothing to look forward to but death—nothing to hope for but vengeance; as for leaders—with the hour comes the man—be sure there will be no lack of leaders. This is no hypothesis—it is a certainty.

There was not the slightest intention to incite people. Hume was merely articulating loudly the beliefs of those who had given earnest attention to the subject and was asking the well-to-do classes to realize betimes the internal danger that faced them. It was an appeal to them to provide the Congress with the means



to plead their country's cause and to flood Great Britain with pamphlets and newspapers so as to awaken the British public as to the reality of the situation in India. The hostile Press, however, made capital out of Hume's speculations. To avert further harm from Congress, the British Committee passed a resolution on April 1, expressing regret that such an injudicious letter should have been circulated and their entire repudiation of the "unjustifiable conclusions" to which Hume appeared to have been "driven in face of the consideration of the deplorable condition of large portions of the Indian people." Dadabhai was one of the unhappy signatories to the letter to *The Times*.

The British Committee of the Congress was another baby Dadabhai had to nurse. An annual sum had been voted for its support by the 1889 Congress; but it did not suffice to meet the expenditure on the journal *India*, which was started as its official organ, and on the other activities of the Committee. The means of Wedderburn were limited; Dadabhai's much more; yet the two devoted servants of India bore a very large part of the financial burden. Wedderburn's share was unquestionably the larger, and he bore the burden, as his biographer, S. K. Ratcliffe, remarks, "for many more years than he should have been allowed to carry it."

Despite his own slender resources and the heavy electioneering expenses, Dadabhai usually advanced small sums from £30 to £200, whenever needed, and guaranteed losses on political breakfasts and other functions and publications. But there were larger contributions too. At a conference held on May 18, Sir Henry Cotton, Romesh Dutt, and S. H. Swinny, who had just returned from India, reported that the general feeling in the country was that *India* was a heavy burden upon the Congress. Wedderburn thereupon submitted a note on the question (June 3, 1903) in which he stated that he had been primarily responsible for the whole expenditure on both the British Committee and *India*. In 1902 a deficit of £137 was left. For 1903 the estimated expenditure was £2,250, whereas till the middle of the year

payment had been received for only 1,750 copies of *India*, out of the 4,000 circulation guaranteed by the Congress:

On various occasions I have explained (he observed) that it was quite beyond my means to remain responsible for such large sums, and both *India* and the Committee would have come to an end in December 1901 had not Mr Dadabhai, in order to give the Congress one more chance, deposited with me Rs 25,000 Government paper as a material guarantee against loss. What we required from the last Congress was to provide a material guarantee in substitution of that now provided by Mr Dadabhai, but this they have not done. The financial position is thus of the most precarious kind, depending upon Mr Dadabhai's willingness to continue his material guarantee from day to day; the period for which he originally granted it having expired when the Congress had met and passed its decision upon our proposals. Such being the condition of affairs, I do not think we should be justified in asking Mr Dadabhai to continue his material guarantee for the £2,250 under present conditions. The sum involved is very large, and there is no reason why he should sacrifice himself in order to continue an arrangement which has no element of permanence, and which we find to be personally wellnigh unendurable.

What was the remedy? Financial separation of *India* from the Committee and from the Congress was one of the alternatives suggested by Dutt. If no one came forward to run the paper, he was prepared to accept all financial responsibility, bearing any loss and taking any profit that might accrue. The offer was not accepted for public and private reasons. Eventually financial assistance was received from other quarters, thanks mainly to the effort made by Gokhale and the Servants of India Society in collecting subscriptions.

*India* was thus kept alive and was discontinued only when the London organization was shut down in the year 1921 for causes other than financial. The British Committee was at the time out of tune with the Congress executive. Moreover, the Indian leaders considered it useless to have a London organization. The Congress, they held, should rely for success upon its

work in India. Meanwhile, Indian Liberals, representing the Hume-Wedderburn tradition, had already established the Indian Reforms Committee, at the formation of which Lord Carmichael presided. Mr. H. E. A. Cotton (later to become Sir Evan Cotton) and Mr. Douglas Hall were Secretaries, Lord Clwyd was elected Chairman and remained Chairman until the Committee was dissolved, mainly owing to lack of support from India.

So much for Dadabhai's concern for the Congress as reflected in his letters. The following letters written by him during the period deal with general topics.

*To J. H. Keene*

*September 3, 1887*

If Englishmen carry on the discussion in a fair spirit, truth will at last come out, and if I am found wrong I shall be more happy.

*September 16, 1887*

It is not the incidence of taxation that is India's evil. It would still be of no consequence if as much Land Revenue as Akbar's were taken. The evil is in the drain of a portion of the revenue out of the country.

*To Wacha*

*October 14, 1887*

The opium profits happen to be large and Government finds it convenient to intercept them as so much indirect taxation. All profits of foreign commerce may be said to be paid by foreign countries. But they are India's property nevertheless, just as all profits of British exports are Britain's profits. . . . As long as the present opium trade remains forced upon China, it is a curse to India.

*October 27, 1887*

If we can once get out of this ditch of the "drain," the rest will all follow in the natural course of things. . . . Rest assured that mere reform of representation in the Legislative Councils would do little if the other reform of the stoppage of the drain is not carried out.

*To Sir George Birdwood**November 23, 1887.*

He (Sir William Hunter) is a good friend of the Natives at heart, and I beseech both you and him to achieve our result, which is the chief aim of my life and the accomplishment of which will be the greatest blessing. I mean simultaneous examinations both in India and England for all departments of civil administration.

*To the Secretary Islington Conservative Association**January 1, 1888*

There is no objection on my part to address a Conservative Association on Indian subjects. For India we need the help of both parties and we are indebted to both.

*To Wacha**December 2, 1887.*

Sir Dinshaw (Petit)'s connection with the Presidency Association is a compliment to the Association. It has its advantages and also disadvantages.

*April 27, 1888.*

If our educated friends would understand and perform their duty with some enthusiasm and sacrifice, either personal or pecuniary, it would be desirable to be as much independent as possible of the rich. If Sir D. (Dinshaw Petit) goes, then our friends (Telang, Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji, and others) will see their way to leave alone the rich gentleman and begin to stand upon their own strength. If our real intellectual and educated leaders determine to lead, the rich leaders will naturally fall in the background. This departure has to be managed with tact and care.

*To A. K. Connell**July 13, 1887.*

The plan of competition properly arranged so as to test the whole man—physically and mentally—would be the best and perhaps the only plan that can be adopted to give “a fair field and no favour.”

I should not have cared one jot, had all the Anglo-Indian members of the Public Service Commission gone against us. It is the defection of the Native members that has done the most harm. . . . The progress is delayed—come it must, but we have to wait longer, though it was quite within grasp now.

*To Wacha*

*July 13, 1888.*

I very much desire that the Indian Press and Associations should first attack the report (of the Public Service Commission). My following the Indian opinion will be more effective than my leading it. The whole report is a monstrous, one-sided pleading—everything is twisted to a foregone conclusion. Simultaneous examination was the only solution of the problem and the pledges

*January 15, 1889.*

If I understand the Secretary of State's despatch to the Public Service Commission aright, the Statutory Service is lost. It is a corpse, its soul is gone. If it was anything at all and worth anything, it was part and parcel of the covenanted civil service with all its rights and privileges. By a stroke of the pen the Secretary of State has cut through the Act of Parliament. He is legally wrong and morally still worse. . . . The only condition justifying its abolition would be the introduction of simultaneous examinations.

*To Malabari*

*April 26, 1889*

I am sorry that the Native members of the Viceroy's Council do not understand the subject of the economic condition of India and their duty towards the poor masses of India. I am not surprised that they should vote for a salt duty and against income-tax. On the Public Service Commission report, Mr. Digby and myself are now preparing a more complete letter to Lord Cross.

*To Wacha*

*February 21, 1890*

Sir T. Madhavrao is doing mischief by opposing the principle of election. What does he mean? Lord Cross's Bill is poor and no

elective principle in it. Petitions must pour in for Bradlaugh's Bill. A great effort is necessary.

*To Robert Grierson*

*March 2, 1890.*

Taking the instance of Madras, where Government have a sort of monopoly, the cost of production (of salt) is about  $5\frac{1}{4}$ d. per maund, equal to 82 lbs., which means about a quarter of a farthing per lb. Government sells this at nearly 12 times or 1,200 % of the cost or 5/- per maund, and thus draws from an absolute necessary of life from a very poor people a revenue of £6,700,000 per annum.

## A YEAR OF WORRY AND GLORY

**A**RDUOUS as is the task of a Member of Parliament at all times, in Dadabhai's case its responsibilities were exceptionally onerous. He had to discharge his duties to his British constituency, as well as to India. Confronted by tried and hard-headed statesmen, what could a single representative of a distant dependency of Britain achieve? No one expected that he would take the House by storm, but the invincible optimist had strong hopes of extorting a hearing, on behalf of India, day after day, until he could make the Indian question a familiar one and get the House to agree to at least a few measures of reform for which he had been crying in the wilderness for more than thirty years. His was not the voice which at once took the ear. But rhetoric is not the lever with which the House is moved. Mastery of facts, courage of conviction, earnestness of purpose—these were the levers with which he hoped to move it. A stupendous effort had to be made, for that he was fully prepared, but what about funds? A delicate question, there is, however, no reason to gloss over facts. Rather it is necessary to refer to them briefly so as to indicate against what odds he had to struggle.

Soon after the election, Malabari, who knew what financial difficulties Dadabhai had to contend with, wrote (July 20)

Mr Mehta from Calcutta wrote to ask if we could raise a fund for you. I asked him to wait till you were consulted. If a call is not well responded to, it would be bad. Dinsha is enthusiastic over your letters and wishes he were by your side. "Then I would die!" he concludes!

As a matter of fact, when he was in the thick of the protracted electoral campaign, Dadabhai had written to Malabari (February

8, 1889) that he had been anticipating a collapse and that the very thought of it had been disturbing his mind and checking free and bold action. That at the last moment he should have to abandon the struggle was, indeed, an appalling thought. Had he remained in Bombay, he might have accumulated money for his children, but he had given up all income—a pecuniary sacrifice greater than that of any other politician of the day, not to mention the separation from his family and the impossibility of rearing his children as he would have liked. The fall in exchange was a further handicap—one-fifth of the limited resources placed at his disposal by a few Indian Princes and personal friends was lost in it.<sup>1</sup> What his needs were he mentioned specifically in another letter to Malabar (January 31, 1890).

Rs 25,000 is not a great mistake. It only means £1,600. I have already spent £800, and will require as much more before he has done. H. H. Rao's money I can partly use towards supplementing my house expenses, as a portion of it would be really for work done. But I cannot take much out of it, as I shall require all I can get for my present purpose and for which I am asking. With the exception of taking as much as would enable supplementing for the everyday house wants and the comfort of the children, I shall need all. In a matter like the one in which I am now involved I cannot depend upon future hopes. You see how soon friends lapse into indifference, as you say is the case at present. Lose or win, I am bound to fight this battle to the end.

After the election the financial problem had become more acute. The calls on a Member's purse are greater than those on a candidate's. How was he to meet those demands when he had not even the means for his own maintenance in England during his membership of the House? It was not known how long he

<sup>1</sup> The average rates at which council bills and telegraphic transfers were sold in London during those years were as under

	<i>Pence per rupee</i>
1890-91	18 089
1891-92	16 733
1892-93	14 985
1893-94	14 547



would sit in the House or how soon he would have to plunge into another electoral struggle. If the general election came on suddenly, where was he to find the funds for it? When such was the predicament in which he found himself, a highly sensational report appeared in the English newspapers. It was announced that since his election to the Imperial Legislature, Dadabhai had received thirteen telegrams from different Maharajas of India with gifts of money varying from £500 to £5,000, making in all £28,000. Nay, more The "Maharaja of Hyderabad" (a designation as fictitious as the report) had sent to Dadabhai an additional sum of £10,000 to enable him to establish a permanent memorial of some kind—a monument, a public library, or some philanthropic institution in his constituency! Hostile papers made capital out of this canard. The *Echo* charged Dadabhai with purse pride in the display of riches, and the *Globe* speculated as to the reason why those Eastern potentates should thus rejoice in the election of one who was not of their blood nor of their religion. Was it an outburst of gratitude or affection, or was it a means of propitiation?

To check further mischief, Dadabhai contradicted the statements in the following letter sent to the London dailies

With reference to the statement in your issue of yesterday that I have received telegrams and £38,000 from India, will you kindly allow me to inform your readers that though it is true that I have received many telegrams since my election, I have not received any money from India

If so much money or even a smaller amount had been poured into the lap of Dadabhai, his friend Malabari would have known it and he would not have sent that letter to Dadabhai, asking him whether a fund should be started to meet his expenses. Funds were, indeed, badly needed. What was received had been well-nigh exhausted, and the sources of supply had dried up for the time being. In reply to Malabari's letter, Dadabhai disclosed his condition, but as regards the proposal to raise funds, he observed (August 10)

I do not like to have any public movement about it. If it can be done quietly . . . I should like it. The fall in exchange makes a great hole and with what I have I shall not be able to work with such full effect as I should do. It is not so much for my own personal expenses which I can manage as economically as possible, but there are other expenses of various kinds, printing, subscriptions, etc. . . . which require a deal of money.

Demands for subscriptions poured in from all directions. Despite his limited means, Dadabhai gave donations, large or small, to all sorts of philanthropic institutions and to individuals in distress.

Captain Penton's petition entailed further unforeseen expenses. The solicitors' charges and disbursements relating to the appeal alone amounted to £1,670. When the petition was pending, he wrote to Malabari (October 14, 1892):

About your suggested mode for raising funds for me (from Princes and a few personal friends), all I can say is that I desire quickness.

How pressing and urgent must have been his needs, may be gathered from another letter in the same month (October 28):

The calls upon me for expense won't wait a day. . . . I must have my backbone (my *kamar no katho*) beyond all doubt. In short, I must have as early as possible my funds in hand for some years.

Then followed a cheerful letter on December 16, stating he had a talk with the Gaekwar who had been very free and kind to him and that it was explained to His Highness that he should remain in the House at least ten years. In another letter (December 22) he said:

I have written to you about the Gaekwar last mail. He was particularly cordial with me here. Unless Princes come to my aid we cannot expect much from the *Seths*<sup>1</sup> or the people. . . . If a lump sum becomes difficult, the next best thing is to have an

<sup>1</sup> Rich men.

annual remittance, but it is so uncertain to rely upon and there may be a collapse. The demands on one as a member of the constituency are more exacting than they are when he is only a *candidate*, both on person and purse. You have always the next election before your face. Our friends do not easily understand the position under which even English candidates and members groan.

Malabari's letters were, however, disappointing. Indifference of friends when approached for financial help is no uncommon thing. One such friend was heard grumbling that Dadabhai was enjoying himself in London. Two other friends, J. N. Tata and F. S. Patel, indignantly refuted the insinuation, and they reported the matter to Malabari just to impress upon him the difficulty of carrying out his scheme to raise subscriptions privately from friends. Dejected as he was by the small amount subscribed in response to private appeals, Malabari wrote under a sense of irritation an article in the *Indian Spectator*, pleading for public support to Dadabhai in his patriotic work. When Dadabhai saw it, he was completely put out. In anguish he wrote (January 5, 1893):

I have felt much distressed by the article in the *Indian Spectator* about the public subscriptions for me. I was sorry to read that the subject was dragged into public controversy and that in a manner derogatory to me. . . . Kindly prevent any controversy upon the subject.

In a letter that followed (January 12), Dadabhai dwelt on the same subject:

Do not be disturbed by any failure in getting sufficient funds. . . . We have gradually to lead on people to a sense of the necessity of making sacrifices for the sake of their country. We cannot expect them to do this at once, and it is our duty the more to bear with them, to lead them on with tact and discretion. . . . To start a rupee fund or any fund openly will result in failure, and even in mischief. That unfortunate article . . . has, as I was fearing, done some mischief.

In self-defence Malabari replied (January 28):

It grieves me to read of your grief over my para. in reference to the subscription. It is a strange thing—this political life of yours. All our friends were indignant at the smallness of the fund. . . I give voice to their indignation which I share. Thereupon the good people turned upon me. . . . I note your distress and will be careful in future. But excuse my saying that the para. was a general criticism, referring to Fawcett, Bradlaugh, and yourself, and that it reflected the general public opinion of Bombay. My object was not so much to insist on your claims as to show how much we have yet to learn in the way of political organization. My second object was to indirectly disprove those who have said in England that you had been helped to thousands.

By the time this letter was in the hands of Dadabhai, he had written to Malabari on February 24:

Yes, I have now drawn my last balance of my resources. How long it will last I cannot say. Unless more aid comes, of course *my only alternative will be to return*. I do not despair though. I shall do what I can.

Then followed an account showing how he was “enjoying himself”:

I am here at about 12 O'clock noon and go back home at 1 or 2 O'clock next morning, all the time working and listening in the House to understand how to vote on every question, and correspondence. It is full twelve hours' hard work. I am not able to employ a private secretary to relieve me.

To such straits was the M.P., who was taken by his constituency to be a very rich man, reduced. In the nick of time, however, help came from Baroda. As the first instalment was received a cheque for £1,000. There were prospects, too, of substantial help coming from Gondal, Bhavnagar, and other Indian States, and it did come. There is no need to go into details.

The anxiety regarding the pending petition against his election was also removed by its withdrawal on December 14. Dadabhai now braced himself up for Parliamentary work.

To distinguish oneself in the great Imperial Assembly is no simple matter even for tried British politicians. What hope was there for Dadabhai to shine in the midst of that constellation of stars of exceptional brilliance? His splendour might at least have been dimmed, if he had not altogether disappeared from view. The Indian luminary, however, lost nothing in brilliance. There was one special circumstance in his favour. Even with the support of the Irish Nationalists the Gladstonian Administration had a majority of only forty in the representative chamber. Consequently, every small group, every unit, was an asset of very great value to the Government of the day. The first Indian M.P. had therefore a better opportunity to find his way in the House and to create a favourable impression than would have been the case if he had been merely a unit in a large majority. Thanks, moreover, to the courtesy of members of all parties, the encouragement of the Premier, the solicitude of old friends like Samuel Smith, Wedderburn, and Caine, and the goodwill and assistance of Lord Kimberley, the Secretary of State for India, and of his Deputy, George Russell, he moved about in the House as if he had been long used to its procedure.

Dadabhai took the earliest opportunity to make his maiden speech during the debate on the Address. It was but a personal note, expressing the joy of his countrymen at his election as a member of the House, coupled with an appeal on their behalf for fair consideration of Indian questions. The House listened with deep attention to the Indian member who, for the first time in English history, stood before them to state his views openly and freely.

He stood there in the name of India to thank British rulers that they had made it possible for an Indian to stand before this House with the conviction that whenever he had any grievance to bring forward, supported by just and proper reasons, he would always find a large number of other members ready to support him and to concede the justice for which he asked. . . . The moral force of which the right honourable Member for Midlothian spoke was the golden thread by which India was held by the

British power; as long as India was satisfied with the justice and honour of Britain so long would the Indian Empire endure.

Close upon that modest speech followed many embarrassing questions and many intrepid arguments. The Indian member invariably occupied over a page of the Order book of the House of Commons with notices of motions calling for detailed information and returns concerning the agricultural wealth of India and other matters concerning that country. Well might some member have called for a return from the India Office, showing the special staff needed, and its cost, for satisfying the curiosity of the member for Central Finsbury.

The growing divergence of value between gold and silver was then engaging the attention of the financiers of the world. An International Conference convened at Brussels had proved abortive. Despite the powerful advocacy of the bimetallists of the day to abandon or modify the gold standard, several Powers, including Britain, were against making any fundamental change in their monetary system. The fall in the value of the rupee had, however, hit India very hard and any arbitrary attempt to fix the ratio was likely to hit her harder still.

Dadabhai had been expounding the problem in the columns of *The Times* and other journals since 1886. He had published also a leaflet entitled *Indian Exchanges and Bimetallism*, containing his contributions, together with those of his critics. One of the letters to *The Times*, which attached great value to his views on this subject, was written on board *S.S. Malwa*, dated Suez, December 23, 1886, when he was on his way to India to preside over the Congress session for that year. It was a brief but emphatic repudiation of all the arguments in favour of bimetalism.

As he was now in a position to raise a debate on the question on the floor of the House, Dadabhai put the question whether the Secretary of State would, before sanctioning any alteration in the system of currency in India, submit the question for the consideration of the House. To this the obvious reply was that the evidence on the question could not be laid before Parliament

consistently with the public interests, until the decision arrived at had been announced.

Dadabhai, however, got an opportunity, within a fortnight, to place his views before the House. On February 28 a resolution was brought forward urging Her Majesty's Government to use their utmost influence to procure the reassembly of the Monetary Conference and to impress upon the representatives of the British Government the immediate necessity of finding some effective remedy, in concert with other nations, for the evils resulting from the divergence in the value of the two precious metals. The proposal was equivalent to sending the British Government on a fool's errand at the bidding of bimetallists who had not the courage to suggest bimetallism as the panacea for the financial ills of the world. Dadabhai opposed the motion in a powerful speech ending with a warning couched in the following emphatic terms:

*There was a commercial disturbance, coming from demonetization in Germany, or the excessive production of silver in America, just as storms arise in the physical world. The United States undertook the absurd feat of trying to stop it and keep up the price of silver, and the result was that the more it was stemmed the greater force it acquired. . . . They must allow laws, commercial, physical, moral, or political, to be governed by nature. If they tried to stop the storm, the result would be far more disastrous. He was of opinion that England must stick to the sound scientific principle of currency that she had adopted. Nor should she allow the currency of India to be tampered with.*

On March 28 Sir Seymour King rose to call attention to the grave and injurious consequences likely to ensue in the Civil and Military Services of the Indian Government from its failure to provide compensation for the reduction of their salaries by the diminution of the value of the rupee. He moved that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the matter. It was stated that the Viceroy had already expressed himself before a deputation, in favour of granting compensation to the officers concerned. Dadabhai was indignant. "It never occurred to the proposer or

to the Viceroy," he said, "that there was another side to the picture. What was the position of the people of India themselves from the fall in exchange? There was not a word of pity or sympathy with regard to those from whose pockets whatever was demanded had to be paid! Truly, the heaviest of all yokes, as remarked by Macaulay, was the yoke of the stranger."

So long as this House does not understand that the yoke as it at present exists practically in India is the heaviest of all yokes India has no future, Indians no hope (Loud cries of Oh! Oh!) You may say "Oh! Oh!" but you have never been, fortunately—and I hope and pray you may never be—in the condition in which India is placed in your hands.

Then he gave a harrowing picture of the poverty of India, citing his favourite authorities. From that question to the drain of India's wealth was the next logical step. "You ought to have some heart and some justice," he observed feelingly, "to consider from what source this money has to be made up." What was the use of a committee? The Viceroy had made up his mind. "There has hardly been an instance," he boldly asserted, "in which a Commission has sat on such a matter as this and decided in a manner that can be called impartial and unbiassed. . . . The whole thing is a foregone conclusion. . . . Do not put additional taxation on these poor people."

Dadabhai then moved an amendment to the effect that if a fixed rate of exchange were determined upon, such rate and the actual market rate of exchange should not become an additional burden on the Indian taxpayer. But for a few occasional cries of "Oh! Oh!" and "Question" the House listened admiringly to those home-thrusts. Dadabhai was cheered over and over again as he established one point after another. Even the Under-Secretary of State, George Russell, although he had to support the original motion, was most sympathetic. "I go all lengths with him (Dadabhai)," he said, "in wishing to protect the pockets of Indian taxpayers. . . . But if the proposal was carried, the cost must fall somewhere."

The motion was lost.



The battle of the rupee ratio was not yet over—in fact, it is being fought even to-day as fiercely as before. Dadabhai had a good deal more to say and to write on the subject, and it would be convenient to turn awhile from the arena of the House of Commons to that of the Indian Exchange so as to have an uninterrupted glimpse of the position taken up by him in the matter.

The Indian Currency Committee of 1893 over-ruled the proposals made by the Government of India for stopping the free coinage of silver with a view to the introduction of the Gold Standard. So far their recommendations were in unison with the evidence given by Dadabhai before the Committee. It, however, suggested modifications of the Government proposals which left to the authorities the discretion to take steps, if and when necessary, to close the mints to the free-mintage of silver accompanied by an announcement that, though closed to the public, they would be used by Government for the coinage of rupees in exchange for gold at a ratio to be then fixed, say, 1s. 4d. per rupee.

A representative of *Commerce* interviewed Dadabhai in connexion with this report, and Dadabhai's criticism of the report was published in *Commerce* (July 5, 1893). The mints were closed and the value of the rupee was divorced from the value of the metal contained in it. By withholding new issues of currency the Government succeeded, after some initial mistakes, in raising the gold value of the rupee to 1s. 4d., at which the rupee ratio was definitely fixed on the recommendation of another Committee appointed in 1898. Before that Committee made its report Dadabhai contributed another letter to *Commerce* (May 11) requesting the editor to republish the report of the interview of 1893, as the views therein expressed by him had, he maintained, turned out to be true. It was said that by closing the mints India was saved 4d. on every rupee remitted for Home charges; but that, contended Dadabhai, was pure moonshine.

What Government has done is that the Government has introduced a fraudulent rupee, and compelled the taxpayer or the

*rayat* to pay his tax in this rupee—i.e. to pay in a “rupee” that is worth 1s. 4d. instead of what he was in the ordinary course liable for, viz. a rupee of 1s. In other words, what Government has done is that it has forced the poor *rayat* to pay one-third more taxation in a fraudulent way than he was liable for, or compelled the poor *rayat* to part with one-third more of his produce to provide Government with a higher valued coin . . . The taxpayer is forced to part with the full amount of the produce to buy the £19,000,000, and by the jugglery of using the “rupee” of a higher value, dust is thrown in the eyes of the people that saving is made by them, as if what is said to have been saved had rained from the sky! . . . It is the British Anglo-Indian, merchant, trader, official, and non-official, and capitalist to whom the matters are made easy.

Why does not Government perform the following miracle? Pass a law that the “rupee” of India must be equal to a sovereign of gold, and that the *rayat* must pay his assessment in such “rupee”? . . . Now the cry is raised to have a Gold Standard. It means that all the little silver that is in British India, as well as the large quantity in Native States, must be deprived of a large portion of its present value, by throwing a large quantity on the market, and to bring a large quantity of gold at a still higher proportion of value, by the large additional demand created. All this loss in cheap silver and dearer gold to be squeezed out of the poor, wretched, famished *rayat* of India! Who will pay all this price of conversion from silver to gold currency? Will the British traders, capitalists, officials and non-officials, at whose cry and clamour this has to be done for their benefit, pay a single farthing towards this conversion, beyond the infinitesimal share they pay of the taxation, and that by exploiting the country to their great profit with the land and labour of the Indians, who come in simply to slave as hewers of wood and drawers of water, to be taxed and “bled” . . . for the benefit of the British people, with famine and plague as their only lot? There was a time in the sixties when I had myself joined in pressing for a Gold Standard, when the burden of the conversion would not have been great as it would be at present. The crude, selfish, legislation of the past few years in matter of currency has been awful. As far as the Home charges are concerned, it will be of no benefit or matter to the Indian.

He will have to find or provide produce worth £19,000,000 sterling gold, whether the currency is gold or silver. It will be nice and easy for the officials and the non-officials who have to make remittances, and they will have no bother of fall or fluctuation of exchanges. Were it not for the tribute "cruel, crushing tribute" as Sir George Wingate calls it, to be paid by India, the fall in silver or in exchange would not have been of any consequence, just as in other silver-using, free, self-governing countries Trade would have adjusted itself according to the exchange.

In another letter published in *India* (May 27), he complained that there was not a single man on the Committee who had shown at any time that he had studied or dealt with Indian questions from the standpoint of the poor Indian taxpayer, with the exception of David Barbour, who, however, was a judge in his own case, being himself the father of the legislation under contemplation. He submitted two statements to the Committee. In the first he declared that the closing of the mints was an illegal, dishonourable, and despotic act. The authorities had bungled—what was the remedy? "Retrace the false step of 1893," he said. "The opening of the mints to the unrestricted closing of silver will correct all the mischievous results that have flowed from the closing of the mints." Further, the true remedy lay in reduction of expenditure and readjustment of establishments. The second statement dealt with the evidence given before the Committee, drawing a distinction and emphasizing a lamentable contrast between two Indias—the prosperous India of the British and the penurious India of the Indians, and dilating once more on the cruel and crushing tribute extorted from India.

A conference of all the Indians resident in England was then held in St. Martin's Town Hall, London, on June 2. From the Chair Dadabhai submitted a resolution as follows:

That fall or rise in exchange does not in itself matter in true international trade, which adjusts itself automatically to the requirements of exchange, that closing the mints or introducing the Gold Standard does not and cannot save a single farthing to the Indian tax-payers in their remittances for "Home Charges",

that closing the mints and thereby raising the true rupee of about 11d. of gold to a false rupee of 16d. of gold is a cruel act of exacting 45 per cent more taxation from the Indian tax-payers, and at the same time of increasing the salaries of officials, and other payments in India by Government to the same extent; that the introduction of a gold standard will simply add more to the existing grievous burdens of the tax-payers to the extent of the cost of the alteration, that the real cause of the terrible evils of poverty, famine, plague, false currency, etc., is what Lord Salisbury calls the "bleeding" of India (or as he says "India must be bled"), and the "bleeding" is further increased by the fall in exchange or rise in gold, that until this most deplorable "bleeding" of India is stopped there is little chance, if any, of saving India and the British Empire from serious disorders or destruction

During the last forty years the theories of political economy and public finance have undergone many modifications and qualifications, but most of the principles stressed and views expressed by Dadabhai hold good to this day. Although his opposition to the change from a silver to a gold standard would seem to have been ill-founded in the light of subsequent experience, the conception that in the long run a rise or fall in exchange is of no fundamental importance, inasmuch as ultimately commodities are exchanged against commodities, needed emphasis in Dadabhai's days, as it does even to-day. So also was it necessary to stress the difficulties of abandoning the silver standard and the cost involved, but his unmitigated opposition to the introduction of a gold standard appears to-day to have been misconceived. Time has muffled the sporadic outcries of the silver interests. The adoption of the gold exchange standard, it is now recognized, has turned out to be an advantage to India. She was thereby linked up to the progressive group of gold standard countries and saved from being the dumping-ground of the white metal which was discarded by country after country. Such a contingency could not, however, have been anticipated by those who lived in the days of Dadabhai. Nor was it realized in his days, as it has come to be recognized only recently, that the

word "drain" has been one of the most heavily worked words in Indian Economics.

To revert to the House of Commons, Dadabhai tabled a Bill to provide that the first examination for appointments to the Civil Services of India should be held simultaneously in India and the United Kingdom. Such a Bill was not called for, as it was in the power of the Secretary of State for India to allow the examination. Moreover, with the Home Rule Bill and other questions of social legislation before the House, the Bill had not the slightest chance that year. Dadabhai knew that, but his object was merely to raise a debate. With great foresight he arranged for a resolution to the same effect being tabled by Herbert Paul simultaneously with the Bill.

Nothing was left to chance. The consummate canvasser had called on members individually and succeeded in impressing upon not a few the reason and justice of the demand. The chances of the Ballot brought Paul the privilege of opening a discussion on the question and moving his resolution on June 2. It was seconded by Dadabhai and supported by Wedderburn. All the arguments in favour of the proposal, with which the reader is now familiar, were successfully put before the House by Dadabhai. Once more he drew a distinction between the declared policy of the rulers and the pernicious operation of the system of government. "Be just and fear not" was the policy of the people and the Parliament of England: whereas the policy of the Anglo-Indian system was "Fear and be unjust." It was for Parliament then to determine whether the declarations made in the name of God and before the world should be acted upon or not.

After a memorable debate the motion was agreed to. It was the proudest moment in Dadabhai's career; all India rejoiced with him. It was, in fact, his victory, for though the resolution was moved by Paul, it was inspired by him, and the support it secured was almost entirely the result of his active lobbying. It was also India's victory—a victory of right over might, of justice over aggression.

A resolution is, however, one thing; executive action another. At best the vote was a snatch one. It had caught Government napping. Not anticipating defeat, they had not rallied their forces for the private members' night. It seemed, therefore, probable that the resolution would remain inoperative. The Lords, moreover, had set their face against it. Dadabhai called upon all his friends, particularly Banerjea, Malabari, and Wacha, to meet that challenge. In a letter to Banerjea (June 16), he suggested a powerful agitation all over India as a counterblast to the opposition in England:

Petitions innumerable should pour into the Commons, approving of their action and praying for practical effect. The whole Conservative party and the Government are against us. We have the Irish and a portion of the Radicals with us. This is a supreme moment. Success on this occasion is of vast importance to our cause. Write to every part of India, rouse it up. . . . Such a good fortune may not again occur to us for some time. All the moral forces and exertions of the past 40 years from 1853 when the first political associations were formed in India have come to fruition. It will be our own fault if we lose this fruit now.

In his letter to Malabari he observed: "India on this supreme occasion must help herself. She cannot send too many petitions."

About this time Dadabhai received a letter from his son-in-law, Fram Dadma, complaining bitterly of the injustice done to Indians in the Educational Service.

Even at the schools (he said) they are introducing raw men from England, superseding tried masters of fifteen and twenty years' experience. Our position is so desperate that it is difficult to keep control. Yet I think in stating our case these men have to be approached as the greatest benefactors that the world had produced.

Such incidents confirmed Dadabhai more and more in his contention that Indianization of the Services was the very foundation of all reform.

Home Rule is scarcely the word (said Dadabhai to a representative of *Pearson's Weekly*); we don't want anything in the least

like what the Irish want. Our movement at present is only to obtain for Indians admission to the Legislative Councils as elected representatives and a fair share in the Civil Services.

Come, Mr. Naoroji (said he), do you mean to say that the end and object of all political agitation in India is to get a handful of young men into the Civil Service! How many would it affect? Not one in five millions, I suppose

Ah no (replied Dadabhai), it means a great deal more than you recognize. It is the very foundation of prosperity and adversity.<sup>1</sup>

The resolution of the House was not binding on the Government of India. It rested with the Secretary of State in Council whether to instruct the authorities in India to give effect to it or not. Lord Kimberley was, however, good enough to write to Dadabhai that although he was personally opposed to the suggested reform, he would not allow his personal opinion to stand in the way and that he had, therefore, forwarded the resolution to the Government of India. This left a ray of hope that powerful agitation in support of the reform might soften the official opposition.

Till the end of the year Dadabhai continued his exhortations for extraordinary effort in India to raise a hue and cry for implementing the resolution of the Imperial Parliament. "Muhammadans must come out strongly everywhere," he wrote in one of the letters. In co-operation with Wedderburn and Caine he also set about forming a small party in the House of Commons pledged to give attention to Indian affairs. Wedderburn, always helpful as a colleague, and Caine, another unfailing friend of India, invited a few members to dinner on July 27, and an Indian Parliamentary Committee was formed with Wedderburn as Chairman, and Mr. Herbert Roberts (now Lord Clwyd) as Secretary. The basis of the Committee was a shrewd suggestion made by R. T. Reid, M.P. (subsequently Lord Loreburn), in a letter addressed to Hume in 1885.

I would recommend you to secure two or three men, as influential as you can, in as many constituencies as you can, and

<sup>1</sup> *Pearson's Weekly*, February 18, 1893.

get them to write to the candidate, exacting no pledge as to the course of policy but a simple pledge to give attention to Indian affairs, and publish the correspondence in local papers. Every candidate in the three kingdoms would pledge himself to so easy an obligation. One in ten would keep the pledge and thus give a nucleus of listeners in an Indian debate. The publication of the correspondence would make them afraid wholly to neglect business they had so publicly pledged to consider.<sup>1</sup>

In the opinion of the Anglo-Indian Press simultaneous examinations for the Civil Service meant Babu *raj*, and the prospect of being governed by the Bengalee Babu was a regular nightmare to the European community. "Experienced Anglo-Indians assure us," solemnly averred *St. James's Gazette* (June 12), "that the change proposed by Mr. Paul might lead to consequences almost as disastrous as the Mutiny. In India the *Pioneer* could not brook the country-wide agitation in favour of the reform. Having got hold of a letter written by Dadabhai to the provincial secretaries of the Congress Committee, in which it was suggested that a clear and pronounced expression of public opinion should be communicated to the English Press so as to help the cause, it declared that the whole agitation was artificial and was merely "the work of Congress wire-pullers obeying Mr. Naoroji's detailed instructions." The Simla correspondent of *The Times* flashed the news of the sensational exposure of the agitation to that journal:

I have done (retorted Dadabhai, August 9) what is done every day in this country by the powerful and influential *The Times* and the whole Press, by every organization of every important movement, by the leaders of all parties, and, in short, by all the machinery that is employed in this country for every important movement. That the enthusiasm of India on the passing of this resolution is thoroughly genuine and spontaneous there cannot be the remotest doubt. The subject was taken up by the Indian Press and by the people generally, immediately on the arrival of the news by telegram and three weeks before my

<sup>1</sup> William Wedderburn: *Allan Octavian Hume*, p. 56.



letter reached India. . . . Sir, India is following the good lessons which England has taught her—to agitate constitutionally and persistently for any just cause, and that we are determined to continue to do.

There being a general desire in India that Dadabhai should be invited to his motherland and given a rousing reception, the Lahore Committee of the Congress invited him to accept the office of President of the next Congress session, and he arranged for absence of a few weeks from his new scene of activities, little dreaming that his path homeward would be darkened by a dire domestic calamity.

Just as he was returning from his hospital work in Cutch Mandvi, on the morning of October 7, Dadabhai's son Adi died of heart failure in the prime of life, leaving his wife with seven children ranging in age from 1 to 12. His fifth daughter, Khorshed, was born after his death. Deep sympathy was expressed by Dadabhai's friends in England and India. Amongst heaps of letters of condolence received by him from all parts of the world, there was one from Malabari, which, brief as it was, struck a touching note of solace:

I know you have enough of faith and fortitude to bear up against this grievous loss. Remember, all India is your son.

Nothing could have been more prostrating than this calamity to a loving father like Dadabhai, but he bore the loss with remarkable fortitude and did not allow his private grief to intrude upon his public utterances or even upon his private correspondence. He attended to the Parliamentary work regularly, as if nothing had happened, and wrote to friends in India as before, giving his views and advice on the problems of the day.

It was not merely for India that Dadabhai had worked during that memorable year. He had rendered signal service to his electors individually and to his constituency generally. Proposals came to him almost every day from the Central Finsbury United Liberal and Radical Association and from the local authorities and

individuals of the Division, asking their representative to raise questions in the House, or to use his good offices for some improvement or some relief. With his usual assiduity and alacrity Dadabhai attended to the matter. When, therefore, the constituency heard of his impending departure for India, the Council of the Liberal and Radical Association passed a resolution (September 28) wishing him God-speed and according him their "heartly approval and thanks" for his persistent efforts in favour of popular rights and also for "his continuous attendances at the House of Commons during the session of unprecedented labour."

A member for a constituency has to do many things for it besides watching its interests in the House of Commons. He has to attend not only political meetings called by his own political party, but also those numerous social and charitable functions which are allied to no party. Besides warmly interesting himself in various charitable undertakings, Dadabhai took lively interest in the work of several friendly and temperance societies in Finsbury. He was an Oddfellow, a Forester, a Druid, and a Good Templar, and was at his best when presiding over a Band of Hope Society and addressing the little children, whose hearts he knew so well how to touch. He had also many engagements with the London Municipal Reform League and various Trades Unions, Trade Societies, and Working Men's Clubs, which had supported him heartily at the election. To the Women's Liberal Federation, the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, the Women's Franchise League, and other organizations for the advancement of women he was a pillar of strength. They all came to him for subscriptions, advice, and co-operation in their activities.

The Member for India was in constant demand for addressing meetings of various organizations and clubs in his constituency, political and non-political, and he took delight in acceding to such requests so far as possible. Even the London Chamber of Commerce and the Institute of Bankers and other commercial bodies throughout England invited him to speak on economic and financial questions. All this made Dadabhai feel more and

more conscious that he was but an instrument by which India had been enabled to make her voice heard in and outside the House of Commons and that his conduct and attitude as the first Indian Member of Parliament should be such as to pave the way for other Indians to the Imperial Assembly.

On November 10 Dadabhai called on Lord Elgin, the Viceroy-designate of India, with a view to enlisting his sympathy in connexion with the Indian problems awaiting solution. "I was the talker all the time," he wrote to Malabari, "upon my various views, and he a listener, and now and then he put me pertinent questions."

Owing to his bereavement, the public celebrations arranged for giving him a hearty send-off to India had to be abandoned. Nevertheless, on the night of November 17, some fifty Indians had assembled on the platform of Charing Cross Station to bid him God-speed.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE HERO'S HOME-COMING

**D**ADABHAI'S home-coming was marked by unparalleled enthusiasm and rejoicing throughout the country. His elevation to the highest Assembly in the British Empire marked an epoch in the political evolution of the Indian people. That historic event, coupled with his early victory in getting the House of Commons to endorse his demand for holding in India and England simultaneous examinations for the Civil Service, appeared to have advanced the political education and raised the political aspirations of India more than years of activities of all the national organizations put together. His triumph meant the triumph of the people, and their feelings of joy, and their sentiment of unity and solidarity thus awakened, were exquisitely reflected in the popular demonstrations held in his honour.

The mail boat carrying Dadabhai was timed to reach Bombay harbour by midnight on December 2. The whole city was astir before daybreak. Crowds of people began to converge towards the place of landing. By 7 a.m. the Apollo Bunder was packed with a dense mass of people. The pier was decorated with flags and flowers and multi-coloured bunting. In front of the structure facing the harbour was a motto in letters of gold, "Welcome Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, M.P."; its companion motto on the other side being "God Save our Queen-Empress and the British Empire." Hundreds of flags and banners were carried by members of numerous deputations sent by various organizations from various parts of the Province. The roads leading to the Bunder were gay with flags and festoons, and there were mottoes, put up on coloured cloth bearing Dadabhai's portrait, thanking the Finsbury electors and welcoming "the bravest, noblest, and best son of India." On one of these banners was inscribed the

benediction, "God bless thee, our selfless man and stainless gentleman," and on another the prayer, "India wants roo like ye for her salvation."

There was not a road leading to the Bunder which was not thronged by hundreds and hundreds of citizens; and everywhere along the route were seen groups of women and children waiting to have a glimpse of the simple man of whose heroic exploits they had heard such fascinating stories. Here, there, everywhere were schoolgirls and schoolboys, with garlands in their hands, ready to greet the man revered as the *Rishi* (Saint) of India. The steamer was, however, behind scheduled time. She was not even signalled in the morning. The Reception Committee of citizens, after a hurried consultation, decided that the landing should take place at four o'clock in the afternoon.

The disappointed folk made their way home, but they turned out once more, long before the appointed hour, and came back to the pier along the route fixed by the Committee. At 4 p.m. the steam-launch conveying Dadabhai and the members of the deputation arrived at the pier. He was dressed in his national costume—black coat and turban and red silk trousers. At the first glimpse the crowd made such a rush towards him that he could not meet even his two daughters and grandchildren, who were eagerly waiting for him in the pavilion. He had to be literally pushed by Pherozechah Mehta, Chairman of the Reception Committee, into the carriage that was kept waiting near the pavilion. In that imposing conveyance, drawn by four gray horses, Mehta and Javerilal Yajnik took their seats with the distinguished visitor. A procession of carriages followed him, and his progress from the pier to his house in Khetwady brought to memory the scenes of triumph of the victorious commanders made famous in history.

From windows, from balconies, even from house-tops, thousands of dusky faces peered down on the moving throng below, and until the conquering hero reached his home the sky was rent every minute with cheers and hurrahs. Almost every family and every institution brought their quota of flowers and

poured them into the carriage in which he kept standing all along the route, bowing to the people.

At 6 p.m. the procession arrived at Dadabhai's house where he was received by his family, including his daughters and grandchildren who had hastened there from the Bunder. Among the friends who went with him into his house was his friend and colleague Seymour Keay, M.P., who had been a fellow-passenger with him on board the steamer.

It was, indeed, a welcome that even royalty might have envied. The first to congratulate Dadabhai on such a magnificent reception was the Governor of Bombay, Lord Harris. That gracious act of the highest citizen of Bombay made a happy people more full of joy. Two members of the Council, the Honourable Messrs. H. M. Birdwood and A. C. Trevor, and the Chief Justice, Sir Charles Serjeant, called on him later.

Members of numerous deputations from Poona, Satara, Belgaum, Sholapur, Surat, Broach, Naosari and other parts of the Bombay Presidency then met Dadabhai at the rooms of the Bombay Presidency Association, where he was requested by Wacha to relate to them his experience regarding his struggles to gain admission to the House of Commons. After referring to his first unsuccessful contest, which had enabled him to advertise himself loudly in the centre of the Metropolis, Dadabhai told the audience how on a vacancy occurring at Central Finsbury, he had jumped in at once. He had met with many disappointments, but his last trump card was India, which did not fail to excite interest. Referring to Captain Penton's petition, Dadabhai said it was easy to make indictments, but difficult to prove them. Ultimately, like wise and sensible men they came to terms. He had been received in the House very cordially, and had obtained support even from Conservative members.

"And was not the late Prime Minister discomfited by your presence?" asked Dinsha Wacha.

"No," replied the high-minded man, carefully refraining from uttering a single word against the statesman whose ill-conditioned tongue had brought ridicule on himself. He merely

remarked that the words used by Lord Salisbury had made him popular all over the United Kingdom. He was invited everywhere, and wherever there was a placard announcing his presence, there was sure to be a large and successful meeting.

On December 18 numerous addresses were presented to the popular hero at the Town Hall of Bombay by various organizations and deputations, the first being that of the Bombay Presidency Association. In thanking them all for the welcome extended to him at the Gate of India, beyond all the dreams of his dreams, he told them that such events as his election were a triumph and proof of the beneficent side of the British rule. He deeply felt his responsibility. He was hardly yet at the threshold of his work for India.

Dadabhai was then invited to unveil the portrait of Sir Dinshaw Petit, the retiring President of the Bombay Presidency Association. It was at his instance that this mill magnate had accepted the Presidentship of the Association and plunged into politics. With the greatest gratification, therefore, Dadabhai unveiled the portrait and complimented Sir Dinshaw on the catholicity of his benevolence.

On December 20 the President-elect of the Congress, accompanied by Wacha, Honorary Secretary, left Bombay for Lahore by the Ahmedabad mail. The wave of enthusiasm that had swept over the country swelled during this journey. Whatever the hour of arrival of the train at each station, day or night, midnight or dawn, men, women, and children in crowds came forward with the customary floral tribute for the *darshan* (sight) of the Grand Old Man.

At Baroda, where he had been given a loving send-off as ex-Dewan, nineteen years ago, he was welcomed by the Dewan and the Nagarsheth of the day, and an address, enclosed in a casket, and a shawl were presented to him. A Hindu youth enlivened the proceedings by offering to the Indian Gladstone a silk-woven portrait of the Grand Old Man of England.

At Ahmedabad, in reply to the municipal address, he recalled

with gratitude the shelter and help given to the ancestors of the Parsi community who had made Gujarat their home after their exodus from their fatherland. At Delhi, after the presentation of the municipal address, a procession was formed and Dadabhai was taken to his hotel through streets lined by people, who gave him an ovation, the like of which the people of that historic city had not witnessed before. At Amritsar the political *Rishi* of India was invested by the officiating priest of the Golden Temple with a robe of honour, according to the Sikh ritual—a signal honour for a Parsi.

At Lahore, which in those days was rarely stirred to enthusiasm on political issues, the Punjabis, including the Muhammadans, were intensely jubilant. As Dadabhai's carriage could only move at a snail's pace through the narrow and crowded streets, it took the procession no less than five hours to go from Lahore station to the Congress camp. On both sides of the road there was one unbroken mass of citizens. Almost every quarter of an hour his carriage, drawn by overjoyed students, with drums beating, bands playing, and banners flying, had to be stopped and cleared of bouquets, garlands, and loose flowers with which it was covered.

The address presented by the Reception Committee of the Congress referred in eulogistic terms to Dadabhai's study and mastery of Indian problems and of his advocacy of the cause of India: "The greatest gift the Parsis have bestowed on India," it added, "is your own good self."

Then followed an address from the Muhammadans and another from the citizens of Lahore. The students of the capital of the Punjab, too, presented an address, stating that his historic victory had taught the younger generation what an Indian, despite all handicaps, could dare and do. In reply to all the addresses, Dadabhai said that his first and most earnest advice to them was that they should be loyal to the British Crown. The British people were always willing to do justice to Indians. Of that his election as a Member of Parliament was an indubitable proof. After exhorting them to rise above sectional feelings, he said:



I am a Hindu, a Musulman, a Parsi, but above all an Indian. My greatest happiness has been thus, that all Hindus, Musulmans, and Parsis have expressed their joy at my return. . . India has a great future before it. I bless India. I bless you.

"He had a welcome," wrote William Hunter in *The Times*, "such as has only on one occasion been rivalled even by a Vice-regal ovation. His reception at Lahore has perhaps not been surpassed since the days of Ranjit Singh."

In the midst of such unbounded public enthusiasm and jubulations, however, Dadabhai's heart was sore. Terribly cut up as he was by the loss of his only son, who had cheered him in his patriotic struggle, he grieved for his sorrow-stricken widow even more. Meeting her for the first time after her bereavement, he was overwhelmed with grief. What about her future? He gave her all the encouragement he could to remain in Cutch with the children, instead of returning to Bombay. Her implicit faith in his judgment and her own courage and patience enabled her to return to Cutch and accept the post of tutor to the heir apparent to the throne, which the Maharao of Cutch had kindly offered to her. Thus was the connection of the family with the Cutch Durbar, which had commenced years before, when Dadabhai had helped it in its dispute with the Political Agent of Cutch, continued for many more years.

In his presidential address, Dadabhai exhorted the Punjabis not to play into the hands of those who were inciting them to oppose the holding of simultaneous examinations for posts in the Civil Service.

I have always understood and believed (he said) that manliness was associated with love of justice, generosity, and intellect. And I cannot understand how one could or should deny to you and other manly races of India the same characteristics of human nature. Yet we are gravely told that on the contrary the manliness of these races of India is associated with meanness, unpatriotic selfishness, and inferiority of intellect, and that, therefore, like the dog in the manger, you and the other warrior races will be mean enough to oppose the resolution about Simultaneous Examina-

tions, and unpatriotic and selfish enough to prevent the general progress of all India. Can offence and insult to a people, and that people admitted to be a manly people, go any further?

He maintained that the efforts of the people of India had succeeded in creating not only an interest in Indian affairs among the people of the United Kingdom, but also a desire to promote the true welfare of India. There was, however, need for further agitation. "We must keep our courage and never say die."

Dadabhai then referred to the efforts made by Lal Mohun Ghose to enter Parliament, and observed:

We owe a debt of gratitude to Deptford and also to Holborn, which gave me the first lift . . . My mind also turns to those good friends of India—Bright, Fawcett, Bradlaugh and others—who pioneered for us, prepared for the coming of this result, and helped us when we were helpless.

Speaking of the reception given to him in the House of Commons, he said:

It was everything that could be desired. The welcome was general from all sides, as the interest in Indian affairs has been much increasing, and there is a desire to do justice to India. Mr. Gladstone on two occasions not only expressed his satisfaction to me at finding an Indian in the House, but expressed also a strong wish to see several more. The attendance on Indian questions has been good, and what is still better, the interest in Indian debates has been earnest, and with a desire to understand and judge rightly.

Grateful as the Indian member was to his British colleagues, he was bound to express his special thanks to the Irish Labour and Radical members. Two days before his departure from England he had received this message:

Don't forget to tell your colleagues at the Congress that every one of Ireland's Home Rule Members in Parliament is at your back in the cause of the Indian people.

The crucial question was: "What is to be our future work?" Dadabhai pointed out how much remained to be accomplished

in connexion with the question of reforming the Councils. The real living representative voice of the people was not to be heard at the Legislative Councils. There should also be, he said, direct representation from India in the Imperial Parliament. All their imperial questions and relations between India and the United Kingdom, and their appeals, could be settled in Parliament alone. There should, therefore, be some reasonable direct representation from India in the House of Commons. "Under present circumstances," he continued, "we have a right to have direct representation. I hope the time is not very distant when we may successfully appeal to Parliament to grant us the true status of British political citizenship."

Then followed all the oft-repeated statements and arguments regarding the impoverishment of India, the costly services, the military expenditure and the burden of taxation. The Duke of Argyll characterized the charges as an unjust and illegal tribute to England, but mark, said Dadabhai, the words of Lord Cross: "I am certain that in the course of a few years the Indian people will force us to do them justice."

This is just the feature (said Dadabhai), to be *forced* to do justice, which I always deplore. We desire that all necessary reforms and acts of justice should be spontaneous on the part of Britain, in good grace and in good time as gifts claiming our gratitude, and not to wait till it was forced, with loss of grace from the giver and the loss of gratitude from the receiver.

The return journey from Lahore to Bombay *via* Agra, Allahabad, Bhusawal, Jalgaon, Khandwa, Mannad, and Nasik was another triumphal procession. It was the same story over again—enthusiasm of the people at white heat, deafening cheers, addresses and floral tributes galore, plentiful sprinkling of rose-water, bands playing, flags flying, all testifying to the cosmopolitan population's appreciation of and gratitude for the patriotic work done by the greatest Indian of the day, and demonstrating beyond doubt that national unity, even in a country divided by caste and creed, was not a dream.

On June 12 Dadabhai received the Bombay Municipal Corporation's address, eulogizing his services to the City in every line of public activity. After several other functions in his honour he took his departure for England on January 22, by the mail steamer *Sutlej*. A demonstration of the college students of the city having been organized in his honour, he drove up, on his way to the Bunder, to the porch of the Elphinstone College. Amidst scenes of lively enthusiasm an address was presented to the first Indian Professor of the College, who had returned to them, bowed with the weight of three score years and eight, as the acknowledged political teacher and modeller of the nation and the inspirer of its hopes and aspirations. "In our younger days," he said in reply, "we are said to be the hope and promise of our land. Now it rests upon you to fulfil that hope and promise in the future."

A large number of students then attempted to unyoke the horses from Dadabhai's carriage. The writer of this memoir was one of them. The scene is still vivid in his mind, and he has a lively recollection, too, of the cracks of the whip of the Parsi coachman, which kept the students at bay. Failing in that attempt, some of them walked in front of and some behind the carriage to the Apollo Bunder. Then a deputation, headed by the famous Parsi chronicler, Mr. R. B. Paymaster, proceeded on board the *Sutlej* to give him a send-off worthy of the revered *guru* whose life work it had been to teach, prepare, and organize myriads of disciples, old and young, to rise to the status of a free nation.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### HISTORIC DEBATES

“THE Chairman and several members of the Central Finsbury United Liberal and Radical Association met me at the Station and gave me a ‘good reception,’” wrote Dadabhai to Malabari on his return to London. Thus auspiciously begun, the year 1894 ended in memorable work in the House of Commons.

The victory of 1893 in the battle of the Services had been nullified by the guerilla warfare carried on by the Government of India. “The House of Commons,” said a distinguished judge, “had the power to do anything except to make man woman”; but in this case the bureaucracy in India had proved too powerful for the House. The victory of 1894, however, led to the fruition of Dadabhai’s strenuous efforts for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the question of Indian expenditure. It was his life-long contention that a full and independent Parliamentary inquiry should be instituted not only into the condition and wants of the people of India, not only into the financial condition of the country, but also into the general system of government.

In the course of the Indian Budget debate Samuel Smith moved a resolution demanding such an inquiry. It led to a luminous discussion on Indian affairs such as the House had rarely listened to before. The terms of the motion enabled members on both sides to travel over a very wide area. Despite great conflict of opinion the debate was conducted with good temper. All the members who took part in it, namely A. Scoble, George Chesney, Seymour Keay, Richard Temple, William Wedderburn, and H. H. Fowler, spoke with full and personal knowledge of the intricacies and difficulties of the problem; they gave expression to divergent opinions on many points, according to their own

angle of vision, but they were all actuated by one and the same motive, namely, to discharge honourably the sacred trust that had devolved upon the British nation. As to the wisest method of discharging the trust, it was impossible to expect them to see eye to eye, but they were all agreed that the supreme consideration should be the benefit of the people of India.

In opening the debate, Samuel Smith made it clear that he did not move the Resolution in any spirit of antagonism to the British Government. He could give the same assurance on behalf of those who supported it. Their desire was not to attack British rule, but to improve it. The main complaint of the Indian people was that the British system of government was too expensive for a poor country. He held that they were right. Having been associated with Dadabhai in the study of the question for nearly forty years, and having revisited India a little while ago, he produced facts and figures to establish the impoverishment of the country. The abyss that swallowed up the resources of the country was its growing military expenditure. The Indian people, said Smith, had no Parliament of their own; they made their mute appeal to the Mother of Parliaments. He begged the House not to reject it.

Dadabhai rose to second the Resolution. It was clear he was asking the House for a large draft upon its indulgence. His colleagues, however, listened good-humouredly to his speech, overlaid though it was, as usual, with all the quotations, facts, arguments, and appeals with which they had been made familiar by his treatises on the subject. He pointed out that the main features in the administration of the eighteenth century were "gross corruption and oppression by the Europeans," and that in the nineteenth century the "heavy weight of the European services" had reduced the country to a state of abject poverty.

Some weeks ago the right Hon. Gentleman the member for Midlothian wrote a letter to Sir John Cowan in which he stated that the past 60 years had been years of emancipation . . . The Irish, the Jews, the slaves, all received emancipation in that wave of humanity which passed over this country . . . in the

very year in which the right Hon. Gentleman began his political career, the people of India also had their emancipation at the hands of the Liberal Party. It was the Liberal Party that passed the Act of 1833 and made the magnificent promises, explained both by Macaulay and Lansdowne. I would ask the right Hon. Gentleman to say whether, after the Liberal Party having given this emancipation at the commencement of his political career, he would, at the end of it, while giving emancipation to 3,000,000 of Irishmen, only further enslave the 300,000,000 of India? The decision relating to the simultaneous examinations means riveting back upon them every chain broken by the act of emancipation. The right Hon. Gentleman in 1893, in connection with the Irish question, after alluding to the arguments of fear and force, said: "I hope we shall never again have occasion to fall back upon that miserable argument. It is better to do justice from terror than not to do it at all, but we are in a condition neither of terror nor apprehension, but in a calm and thankful state. We ask the House to accept this Bill, and I make that appeal on the grounds of honour and of duty." Might I, then, appeal in these days when every man in India is thoroughly loyal, when there is loyalty in every class of the people of India, and ask is it not time for England to do justice to India on the same grounds of "honour and duty"?

George Chesney thought India's case was similar to that of people who were compelled to call in the aid of a doctor or a lawyer. It would, of course, be better for a man if he could cure himself in sickness, or if he could conduct his own law-suit. But nobody would contend that because the man found it difficult to pay for the services of his doctor or lawyer, he should not be called upon to do so. The question was whether India had paid too much. He believed that the benefits which she had derived from the assistance of England were far in advance of any pecuniary liability she had had to bear.

Seymour Keay, who followed the official apologist, pointed out that those who had been singing the praises of the Government of India had missed the cardinal point of the Resolution under discussion—namely, that however excellent the govern-

ment of India might be, the condition of the people of India was such that they could not discharge the enormous expenditure connected with it. It was not a question of the value of the government, but a question as to whether such a government could be sustained by the people.

The Secretary of State for India was not opposed to an inquiry, but what, he asked, was "a full and independent Parliamentary inquiry"? He believed all Parliamentary inquiries were independent. Perhaps the mover meant impartial. Or did he mean to restrict the class of members to be put on the Committee? The proposal was to inquire into the condition and wants of the Indian people and their ability to bear the existing burdens, the nature of the revenue system, and the possibility of reductions in the expenditure; also the financial relations between India and the United Kingdom, and the system of government in India generally. That was a tall order. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was not prepared, in the previous year, to refer the British Constitution to a Select Committee. It was not to be expected that the House would now sanction referring the constitution of the Government of India to a Committee. After all, any question relating to the Imperial policy with reference to India must be a question for the responsible Government of the day—no House of Commons would allow any Government to shelter itself behind the Report of a Committee in dealing with such a question. The Secretary for India admitted that it would be wise from time to time to have an inquiry as to how the revenues of India were spent. He suggested, however, that the motion might be withdrawn; in that case he would undertake, on the part of the Government, that at the commencement of the following session they would propose the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into that question. Samuel Smith accepted the suggestion, holding himself and his supporters free to ask for an extension of the scope of the inquiry so as to enable the Committee to deal with the tax-paying capacity of the people of India.

Before a commission was appointed, Dadabhai raised another debate on the question to bring within the purview of the inquiry



the question of apportionment of certain expenditure between England and India. On the Address in reply to the speech from the throne he moved, on February 12, 1895, an amendment to add the following words to the Address:

And we humbly pray that Your Majesty will be graciously pleased to direct Your Majesty's Ministers, to so adjust the financial relations between the United Kingdom and British India, with regard to all the expenditure incurred in the employment of Europeans in the British-Indian services, civil and military, in this country and in India, that some fair and adequate portion of such expenditure should be borne by the British Exchequer in proportion to the pecuniary and political benefits accruing to the United Kingdom from Your Gracious Majesty's sway over India; and that the British Treasury should sustain a fair and equitable portion of all expenditure incurred on all military and political operations beyond the boundaries of India in which both Indian and British interests are jointly concerned.

He was not asking for charity. All he asked for, he averred, was that India should be justly treated. India fully appreciated the blessing of law and order under the British regime, but some law and order were absolutely essential to the existence of Europeans in that country as well as to the maintenance of the British rule.

The next question was: What was India's benefit and what was Britain's?

India has to pay for European services in both countries two hundred millions of rupees annually. . . Hundreds and thousands of millions of money are consumed and carried away in that way, and it places a monopoly of everything in British capital. We cannot compete with it, and the result is that you have not only the benefit of the officials receiving that money, but, under their patronage, of providing British traders, merchants, farmers, shipowners, planters, capitalists, and others. You have naturally a monopoly of all that has to be done, and the profits are all the profits of the British; we work for the British and for British profits, and the Indians are in a way worse off than the Southern

slaves, for the reason that those slaves were taken care of and housed and fed by their masters. Further, they did not work on their own property, but the Indians do work on their own property, and give the profits of their work to the capitalists of European countries. The benefits received by the Indian are insignificant when compared with Britain's benefits.

Once more he put in a powerful plea for a policy of righteousness.

You may create an empire by brute force, but you will never maintain it except by moral force founded on justice and righteousness . . . if I asked that even the whole expenditure in regard to Europeans should be defrayed by the British exchequer, I would be amply justified.

It was one of his most impressive speeches in the House. His colleagues might or might not accept his statements or his views, but none could question the fairness of his demand for an inquiry. The Secretary of State pointed out that the issues raised in the amendment pertained to matters of Imperial policy and were not questions for a Select Committee; but he was not against an inquiry into the question whether an unfair share of home charges was placed on the Indian Exchequer. The mode in which that inquiry should be conducted had not yet been decided. Reasons had been urged upon him to show that a Parliamentary inquiry was not the best mode. Accidents happened to Parliaments. They lasted a certain number of sessions; they might come suddenly to an end. Accidents, too, happened to members; members of one Parliament might not be members of the next. It had, therefore, been urged upon him whether it would not be desirable to have a small, but thoroughly efficient and impartial, Royal Commission to inquire into the question. Not only on behalf of his colleagues in the Government but also on behalf of his colleagues at the India Office and the Indian Government, he warmly assured the House that it was their desire not to oppress India, not to bleed India, not to injure India, but to go on in the career of progress that had characterized the rule of India by Great Britain.

Dadabhai then withdrew his amendment and sat down triumphant. He succeeded because he had mastered the subject and had facts to support his contention and because the House was convinced of his earnestness.

A proof of the desire of the Government not to injure India was a Bill for imposing duties on the import of cotton manufacture into India. The representatives of the vested interests, however, resorted to a manœuvre to smother the measure. On February 21, 1895, Sir Henry James asked leave to move the adjournment of the House in order to discuss that "definite matter of urgent public importance."

Dadabhai rose indignantly to protest. Did he wish to see the Empire in India endangered, were he a rebel at heart, he said, he should have welcomed that motion. Such motions would increase the feelings of dissatisfaction and irritation among the Indian people which, if continued, would assuredly bring about disintegration.

I appeal to the Unionists to vote against this motion or they will drive the first nail in the coffin of British rule in India . . . Remember, whatever you are, you are still like a step-mother. Children may submit to any amount of oppression from their own mother, but from their step-mother they will always demand the strictest justice.

Could he appeal to the Home Rulers? If they meant Home Rule, they meant that it must rest entirely on the integrity of the Empire, but never was a motion brought before the House more separatist than the one under consideration:

The passing of this motion would be the passing of a motion of disunion. Perhaps you may not feel the effect for some time, but I impress upon this great assembly that though a revolution may not take place to-morrow, it is the accumulation of many years, of many disappointments, many inattentions, that at last produces a revolution. Do not forget 1857. I, for one, desire from the bottom of my heart that the British rule and connexion may last for a very long time.

About this time Russia was bent upon building up a vast Asiatic Empire. The Russian bogey was a nightmare to Britain. A fresh rumour of Russian invasion then formed a central topic of discussion in English newspapers. Dadabhai took the opportunity to give his views on the subject in an article entitled "The Fear of A Russian Invasion," which was published in the September number of *India*. Calling attention to the most important element in the problem, namely the attitude of the people of British India and of the Native States, he observed:

If the system of the present despotism, drain and distrust are continued, sooner or later, perhaps sooner, if Indian human nature is like all other human nature, great trouble will ensue, whether Russia can invade or not. Invasion by Russia sinks into insignificance compared with the troubles that the British Indian system itself is storing up. I have been crying in the wilderness for a long time. . . . If the internal problem is satisfactorily solved, we may quite contentedly leave Russia to her own devices. . . . Let there be a contented, not a distressed, British India and Englishmen may snap their fingers at any external danger.

How were the Indian authorities promoting contentment in India? Let Dadabhai put this question in his own stirring words, addressed to the Indian Expenditure Commission:

Is it productive of loyalty and goodwill to tell the Indians, "you will be kept down with the iron heel upon your neck of European services—Military and Civil—in order to maintain our power over you, to defend ourselves against Russian invasion, and thereby maintain our position in Europe, to increase our territory in the East, and to violate all our most solemn pledges? And all this at your cost, and mostly with your blood, just as the Empire itself has been built up. We have the power and for our benefit; and you put your Parliament and your Proclamation into your pocket."

"Are the Indian people dissatisfied with our rule?" asked a representative of *Great Thoughts* in the course of an interview

with Dadabhai, shortly after the debate in the Commons (August 8, 1895):

Dissatisfaction is growing every day (replied Dadabhai), and he would be a bold man who asserted that it would not one day lead to some terrible disaster

The country has since been often on the verge of disaster which, however, thanks to the Congress policy of non-violence, has so far been averted.

I prophesy (said Dadabhai, in reply to another question) that this constant violation of pledges, this persistent opposition to Indian interests and the deterioration and impoverishment of the country by an evil administration, must lead, sooner or later, to a rebellion. I hope I may prove a false prophet, but in the interests of the British Empire I say that forces are gathering, vast and powerful, which will succeed in shattering the British Indian Empire, if the present evil and destructive system of administration be not thoroughly reformed . . . The Indian authorities are doing everything in their power to tempt Russia to invade India, both by their policy of dissatisfying the Indian people with their rule, and by making an easy road for Russia through the mountains of Afghanistan at our expense.

What then do you consider would be a wise policy to pursue with regard to India?

To satisfy her with the justice of British rule (replied Dadabhai), to be honest and honourable in all our solemn pledges and thus to make Indians feel that to fight for the British rule is to fight for their own hearths and homes and property. With Indian subjects of such a temper you could defy half a dozen Russias.

In another interview given to G. W. Tooley, and published in *The Humanitarian* (June 1895), Dadabhai gave expression in more emphatic terms to his apprehensions of a revolt in India.

Whether your past system was a righteous one for India may be a matter of argument, but face to face with an awakened population such as India now has, and will have more and more every year, the present system of government is an absurd and

dangerous anachronism. Russia shows you what will happen in India unless Indians are given more interest in the government. There will be secret societies.

Do not misunderstand me (said he earnestly), there is immense gratitude in India to England. The present generation feels the benefit it has derived from education. . . . But succeeding generations will not feel that. They will start where men in India to-day leave off. They will have no personal memory of old India. However improved the conditions in which they find themselves, they will accept them as a matter of course. They will demand more, and if they do not get it, they will rebel.

No account of the work done by Dadabhai in the House of Commons would be complete without a reference to the part he took in the debates in the House concerning the opium trade. Early in his career as a business man he had expressed his abhorrence of trades pandering to the lowest forms of sensual indulgence and had informed his partners that he would not touch the profits derived from the firm's dealings in opium and wines and spirits. He had also told Lord Hartington in his memorable correspondence with him that the opium trade was an instance of the demoralization of the British Government itself. In 1886 he found several members of the House of Commons and other British citizens waging a war on opium, and he readily plunged himself into the contest. The Rev. Goodeve Mabbs, Secretary to the India and China League, called on him to seek his active co-operation in organizing a concerted attack on the policy of Government. As he was then engaged in his first electoral campaign, it was considered desirable to suspend active efforts. Soon after the election, however, he threw himself heartily into the movement. The object of the League was not confined merely to the suppression of the opium trade. It aimed at creating a powerful public opinion on Indian questions of a moral character themselves, or which were related thereto, and to carry on an agitation in that behalf. The practical measures principally promoted comprised, besides withdrawal from the opium trade, Indian Financial Reform and "native participation" in the

Indian Government. In 1888 another organization was formed, called the Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade, with offices at Broadway Chambers, Westminster. Appealing to the great heart of England, it called all true Christians to a holy war.

How Britain came to be responsible for the evil may be briefly told. In several parts of the Indian Empire Government had a monopoly in the growth, manufacture and sale of opium. They licensed every poppy plant that was grown, subsidized the cultivator, bought the crop at a fixed price and manufactured the drug expressly for the Chinese market; sold it by auction at Calcutta and pocketed the profits. Public sentiment revolted against such a traffic, but Government pleaded their inability to do without the opium revenue and their apologists refused to admit that opium taken in moderation had any deleterious effect.

The Christian missionaries, who were unhappy eye-witnesses of the dire distress, disease and degradation directly attributable to the policy pursued by Government in this matter, were very bitter in their complaints to their friends in England. One of them burst out in indignation:

Bishop Heber sweetly sang

Waft, waft, ye winds, His story  
And you, ye waters, roll  
Till, like a sea of glory,  
It spreads from pole to pole.

But in the very deed we are saying

Waft, waft, ye winds, the opium  
Prepared in England's name,  
To bring us golden millions,  
Whate'er may be the shame.

These crusaders won a partial victory on the floor of the House of Commons on April 10, 1891. On that day a resolution was passed, affirming that the system by which Indian opium revenue was raised was morally indefensible and expressing the opinion that the Government of India should "cease to grant licenses for the cultivation of the poppy and sale of opium in

British India, except to supply the legitimate demand for medicinal purposes," and that they should at the same time take measures to arrest the transit through British territory of opium cultivated in Indian States. The opium question was thus raised to a position it had never before occupied.

Dadabhai was pleased with the progress made, but it seems he was greatly disappointed that the real grievance of India for which his heart was aching and bleeding was lost sight of by the leaders of the anti-opium party. On October 31, 1892, Joseph Alexander, Secretary to the Society for the Suppression of the Opium Trade, sent him a draft memorial to the Secretary of State for India, making China, not India, the prominent subject on this occasion, and asked him to join the deputation which was appointed to present it.

Dadabhai pleaded his inability to participate in the proceedings and wrote in reply :

As the Indian National Congress has not spoken yet, the views I express are only my own. You know already that I am in full sympathy with the moral object of the Society, and I have made some sacrifice for it. You also know that according to my view the Society unfortunately does not realize the real source of the disease and of all our other woes. Its members do not seem to have ever asked themselves the question why India is so poor as not to be able to pay for her own wants of government and why she must depend either upon poisoning another people, or upon the charity of the English people, or upon further grinding taxation beyond what she is already subject to, even to the oppressive taxation of a very absolute necessity of life like salt.

Then followed his lament over the millions drained away from the poor country, and his prayer that the British public would "look a little deeper into the Indian problem."

When the question was once more raised in the House of Commons by Alfred Webb in June 1903, Dadabhai took the same line of argument. He had been studying the question, he told the House, for years and had edited a pamphlet against the opium traffic forty years before. While he maintained that that



traffic was a curse both for England and India, he wished to point out that it was a mere fringe of the great question of Indian administration under the system then prevailing. Why should not the Commission, that was proposed to be appointed, go into the whole question?

This debate was memorable for the lucid exposition of the case by Gladstone. Speaking on behalf of the Government, he had the candour to admit that it happened not infrequently in human affairs that those who ought, from their position, to know the most and the best, yet from prejudice and prepossession knew the least and the worst. While, therefore, he refrained from supporting the viewpoint of the authorities on the spot and was prepared to refer the matter to a Commission for enquiry, he took the opportunity of explaining that Government had ceased forcing the trade upon China. They had left the matter to China herself except that the opium which they allowed to be exported and for which they derived a large revenue was sent to that country to be received by China, if she chose to receive it.

The Commission that was appointed made its report in 1895. The anti-opium party was not satisfied with its findings. It complained bitterly that having appointed the Commission, Government had proceeded to "dry-nurse" it. The witnesses were directed; the anti-opium party was not allowed to bring up a single witness. There was further agitation. A public meeting was organized to strengthen the hands of Joseph Pease, the hero of several struggles in the past, in launching another battle. Dadabhai was one of the soldiers in that fight. There was another debate in the House on May 29, 1895, but the defeat of the Government on the question of the supply of cordite, its resignation and the subsequent dissolution of the House on July 8th, put an end to Dadabhai's activities in that direction.

Drink was another curse which Dadabhai hoped to see eradicated during his life-time, and it seems best to give here a brief account of his activities for the suppression of that evil. In his two life-long colleagues in politics, Caine and Samuel Smith, he found two ardent champions of the temperance movement in

England. When Caine was in Bombay in the year 1888, he called a conference of representative Indians where a strong desire was expressed that an organization should be formed in Great Britain, to act in conjunction with branch associations in India, with a view to saving India from the growth of the drinking habit amongst the people. The Anglo-Indian Temperance Association was inaugurated accordingly, with Samuel Smith as President. Dadabhai was a zealous member from its inception and a member of the Executive Committee for several years.

The co-operation of the National Temperance Association of Great Britain was secured, and public opinion was stirred in both countries. A wave of temperance enthusiasm then swept over India such as is witnessed to-day under the regime of Congress ministries pledged to the policy of prohibition. Branch Committees were formed in all the principal cities of India and a network of Temperance Societies was established throughout the country.

Lectures were organized and suitable literature distributed in every Province, deputations from England were sent to India with a view to the encouragement of the workers and the extension of the movement. It was Dadabhai's contention that Indians were not a drinking people and that the religion of large numbers of them had prohibited the use of intoxicating liquors. All that was needed was to prevent wines and spirits going to India, but while giving India Western civilization, the British Government had introduced in that country, which was by religion and life abstinent, what Caine called "the most Western of all institutions," the excise system, and with it the liquor-shop. Almost all the distilleries in India belonged to Government. They let out liquor-shops by public auction to the highest bidder who undertook to sell the largest number of gallons of liquor from the distilleries.

The Association got a resolution carried in the House of Commons (April 1889), calling upon the Government to introduce drastic reforms in the Indian Excise administration. In their

annual statements exhibiting the moral and material progress of India, Government took credit for having restricted the use of illicit intoxicants. But did it affect the sobriety of the people? In that romantic publication itself was to be seen from year to year evidence of considerable increase in the excise revenue, which was due not merely to improved excise administration but also to the increased consumption of "licit liquor."

The moral evil of the yearly growing consumption of liquor, the harvest of crime, destitution, disease and death, was apparent to many; but its economic evil was not so readily realized. Addressing one of the Temperance Lodges, on April 8, 1891, Dadabhai pointed out that the Drink Bill of the English nation amounted to about £130,000,000.

Now (said he) if so much money were simply thrown away into the sea, it will be but a small evil. But the evil is doubled and multiplied. So much material, the gift of nature and labour, fit for the food of man, is converted into so much not only un-nourishing but destructive material. While, therefore, on the one hand the people are deprived of food with all this money, they are on the other hand demoralized by the drink that takes the place of the destroyed food. This want of food, then, not only diminishes so much production and power of labour, but makes the labourer worse than useless, inflicting poverty, starvation and misery upon him and his family and causing crime. I do not know how the misery and suffering of the general deterioration of the whole race can be valued by any amount of money . . . A few figures speak more eloquently than a volume of words. I take the total cost of drink to be about £130,000,000. This means that about the same amount would have supplied the whole people of the United Kingdom all the year round with all the bread (£70,000,000), butter and cheese (£35,000,000) and milk (£30,000,000), or the same amount would have supplied all the people all the year round the whole house rent (£70,000,000) and all the woollen and cotton and linen goods (£66,000,000). Fancy all this good not only not obtained, but on the contrary, evil to that amount inflicted upon the people and, thereby, the power of reproducing all that wealth more or less destroyed.

But worst of all—there is general deterioration of the nation and the diminution of the average length of human life.

In his opinion, the position taken up by the Association, namely the Veto, was the only right course to adopt. Wherever a good majority of the people desired to get rid of the evil, they should have the power of stopping it. It was simply the right application of the democratic principle that the good of the people at large, and not the indulgence or supposed pleasure of a few, should decide the condition of a community.

Dadabhai continued

The Liberal programme has definitely accepted the "Veto"—stick hard to it! Now is the time to make a supreme effort. Send the Liberal Government in and hold it fast to the fulfilment of its pledge, and the oldest of us will live to see the accomplishment of the "Veto," and the destruction of the evil as far as human means can accomplish it!

In pursuance of a resolution passed at the Annual Meeting of the Association, presumably at the instance of Dadabhai, a considerable number of Indians resident in London, mostly students, met at Westminster Town Hall, to inaugurate an "Indian Brotherhood of Total Abstainers." Samuel Smith presided and blessed the movement. He believed, with Dadabhai, that one of the most hopeful and effective ways of grappling with the drink evil was to make the rising generation detest it and regard it as its duty and life's purpose to destroy it. The Indian Brotherhood was formally inaugurated and Dadabhai was elected President.

The elements of English society to which the promoters of the organization belonged (he observed) were often despised as faddists and fanatics, yet it was mainly to the efforts of that section of the community that all the great moral and social reforms of the country were due, to wit, the abolition of slavery, the emancipation of the Jews, the removal of Roman Catholic Disabilities, and many other similar movements. The founding of this Brotherhood is a little seed sown for the emancipation of India, and as such he was proud to be connected with it. Another promising

feature about it is that Hindus and Mohammedans were able to meet together and to take concerted action upon the great question which affected all communities alike.

The Brotherhood does not appear to have promoted the cause of abstinence to any appreciable extent. It was not, however, to be expected that a floating population of students could achieve much in that direction. Dadabhai was content to see young students interested in the temperance movement and carrying with them to India a sense of abhorrence of the drink habit. Ever optimistic, he looked forward to the day when all India would vote for prohibition. Speaking on the resolution moved by him at the meeting of the Anglo-Indian Temperance Association, held on April 17, 1905, regarding the action of Government in withdrawing the Bengal Excise Bill, and referring it back to local officers, he observed:

They had 300 branches of the Association in India, and this meant that people of all classes, creeds, and of every position from the top to the bottom, were learning the great lesson of associating together, becoming like brothers to each other, working for one great cause. . . . These 300 societies would grow into 3,000 and many more, and the 300,000,000 of human beings in India were being prepared for a higher and more civilized condition of life. This association was starting not only the cause of breaking down drinking in India, but the equally good cause of raising the people to a higher position of thought and of union which would be of the greatest use to them.

## UNSEATED

THE long-expected announcement of the appointment of a Royal Commission was made towards the end of May 1895. By a Royal Warrant, dated May 24, Commissioners were appointed, with Lord Welby as Chairman, to inquire into the administration and management of the Military and Civil Expenditure incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State for India in Council or of the Government of India, and the apportionment of charges between the Governments of the United Kingdom and India for purposes in which both were interested. Dadabhai was invited to join the Commission. He was the only Indian member, but there were two British members as good as if not better than Indians—Wedderburn and Caine.

A seat on the Royal Commission meant arduous work, particularly for Dadabhai, who had been agitating for years for the appointment of such a Commission. At the first session of the Indian National Congress he had moved a resolution asking for an inquiry into the working of the Indian administration through a Royal Commission. After ten years the request was granted. It was up to him to make out a strong case for reform. He had to convince the hard-headed statesmen constituting the Commission that all that he had been urging against the foreign rulers was not mere talk, that every statement made by him was based on facts and figures and that what he had urged and wished to bring home to his colleagues was supported by the evidence of capable witnesses. He had also to equip himself with complete data to cross-examine hostile witnesses, particularly the official block. He had, moreover, to make up his mind and ask his friends in India to make up their mind and to state to the Commission

in clear and definite terms what it was that India wanted as a practical and efficacious remedy of all the ills of which she had been complaining. Even for a giant like him the task seemed overwhelming. Had he the time to cope adequately with it?

The dissolution of Parliament on the heels of the Commission's appointment should have left him free for the work. But Dadabhai would not thus allow himself to be excluded from the House. He had now greater claims on the suffrages of Central Finsbury than ever before; and he was adopted as the candidate for the constituency at a meeting of the United Liberal and Radical Association, held on March 14. Heartily approving of the admirable manner in which he had performed his duties in the House of Commons, the meeting pledged itself to use its best exertions for his election.

The chances of success for a Liberal were, however, very poor. During the term of office of the Liberal Parliament, important questions seriously affecting various powerful interests had come to the front. Death duties, Land questions, and a trend towards progressive Labour legislation had roused the ire of landlords, capitalists, monopolists, and other monied interests. The question of Local Option had antagonized the publicans, who worked like one man to save themselves from the threatened ruin of their business. The question of Disestablishment and Disendowment had frightened the Church interests, and the question of abolition of the House of Lords had enraged the aristocratic element in the country. To quote Dadabhai's own words in a letter to Wacha, "the parson, the peer, the publican and property were fighting a life-and-death struggle against the coming doom."

Slender though the chances of success against such a combination of forces were, Dadabhai threw himself heart and soul into the struggle. In his address to the Electors he pointed out how he had fulfilled his promise that he would devote all his time to Parliamentary duties and that the local wants and interests of his constituency would have his special attention. In 1892 there was

only one division in Parliament, and he had voted in it. In 1893-94 the Session was divided into two parts. In the first part there were 310 divisions, in 304 of which Dadabhai had voted. During the second part of the Session he was absent for some months owing to his visit to India, but in 1894 he had voted in 231 divisions out of 246. In 1895 there were 139 divisions and he had voted in 118. Few members could claim such a record of regular attendance. When he had to miss a meeting, he was always paired so that not a single vote had been actually lost by the constituency. Dadabhai claimed that he was closely attentive to Committee work also and that the local wants and interests of Clerkenwell had always had his prompt, earnest, and careful attention. He then stressed the good work accomplished by the Liberal and Radical Party during the three years, but although a good deal of progressive legislation had been put through, much of the great Newcastle Programme still remained to be carried out. It followed that all Liberal and Radical electors should exercise their sovereign power and send back the Liberal Party to carry through the great work entrusted to them in 1892. A few of the items of the important work which lay before them he enumerated as under:

For Irish Home Rule, the Liberal Party are bound by every duty of honour, and even by self-interest. It will be one of those glorious land-marks of civilization in British history with which it is replete during the present century. The Welsh Disestablishment; Home Rule for London in all its various important requirements; the restriction of the Veto of the House of Lords, if not its Abolition; Taxation of Land Values for National and Municipal Purposes (a Bill for the latter purpose had been twice introduced by him); Division of Rates between Owners and Occupiers; Payment of Members; Perfect and Easy Registration of Electors by Responsible Public Registration Officers; One Man One Vote; Residential Adult Suffrage; Eight Hours; and Direct Popular Veto of the Liquor Traffic.

Enthusiastic meetings were held in support of Dadabhai's candidature and powerful appeals made by local Liberal leaders to



support their "present faithful, devoted member." One of the leaflets ran as follows:

Who stood by the Poor Costers in Farringdon Road? Why,  
the Radical Clubs and Trade Unions Then Costers, Vote for  
Radical and Trade Union causes and D NAOROJI

Similarly, the Irish National League backed the Indian Gladstone, so that in spite of the storm that was blowing over Liberalism, Dadabhai's prospects did not seem quite gloomy. On the eve of the election wrote Martin Wood (July 11) "I hear hopeful reports of your prospects, go ahead"

Dadabhai was, nevertheless, caught in the storm. The wave of reaction which submerged William Harcourt in Derby and John Morley in Newcastle was equally destructive in Central Finsbury. While Dadabhai was busy in the House of Commons, his opponent, the Hon. W. F. B. Massey Mainwaring, had been assiduously pushing his claims to the seat. Besides ample leisure and unlimited resources, he had two powerful allies in the Church and the liquor interest, and he won the seat by a majority of 805 votes, the figures being 3,588 against 2,783.

Whilst a distinguished Indian patriot was thus unseated, another Indian, M. M. Bhowanagsee, who had no pretensions to a mastery of Indian problems or to patriotic service, but whom, according to general belief, the Unionist Party had put forward as a counterpoise to Dadabhai, was returned for Bethnal Green. He defeated the Liberal candidate, G. Howell, by 160 votes. His political creed differed from Dadabhai's so radically that his election gave rise in India to serious apprehensions. Indeed, Bhowanagsee's attitude was then spoken of in Congress circles as Anglo-Indianism run mad. Although he was not so abjectly pliant as he was often represented to be, soon after he entered the House he was named "Bow-and-Agree" and "Bow-the-Knee." It might have been a matter of some consolation for India if instead of one so distrusted, another Indian, W. C. Bonnerjee, who had been attempting to wrest Barrow-in-Furness from the Unionists, had been elected. But while the Liberals were routed in almost

every contested election, the famous Bengalee lawyer was also among the wounded.<sup>1</sup>

India heard of Dadabhai's exclusion from the House of Commons with deep regret. He, however, took his defeat calmly. It did not make his courage flag for a moment. In a letter to Sir George Birdwood (July 25), he said:

The wave against the Liberals has been irresistible. However, I am not depressed or discouraged . . . In the wellnigh fifty years of my public life I had my successes and reverses, and the present defeat cannot affect me more than any did before.

The high-toned message which he sent to his fellow-countrymen shows that his failure simply made him face the world with redoubled energy.

In such a general wreck of the Liberal Party, I have suffered as one of them. But the only policy upon which I have acted through life—the policy of “Go on with patience and perseverance” whether successful or unsuccessful in any good cause—is the one upon which I shall act now as ever before. As long as I have the health and opportunity of serving my country I shall continue to do so. This is the last work of my life, and I intend to go on with it. I mean, therefore, to try to get into the House of Commons again, as it is there that the battle of the grievances and necessary reform of India and the stability of the British Empire have to be fought. The good of India is the good of the British Empire. Vast and powerful forces are working and growing in India. If the statesmen of the day do not direct them to the promotion of the interests of the Empire, producing satisfaction and prosperity among the people, they cannot and should not expect that these forces will not go against the British rule and end in some disaster. My humble efforts have always been, and will continue to be, directed to avert this calamity as far as an individual's efforts can go.

The moral he drew from the result of the election is of profound significance to the student of socialism and class warfare.

<sup>1</sup> He received 2,355 votes against 3,192 polled by his rival, C. W. Cayzer.

In 1688 (said he in a letter to Wacha) the Aristocracy usurped the place of monarchy, leaving the people in the cold as ever. The evolution of two centuries has at last transferred the sovereign power to the people. A portion of the masses do not seem to have realized their sovereign power and they have made themselves the instrument of their own suicide and the disaster of the present election is the defeat and suicide of the working men by a section of their own ranks who have succumbed to influences which have always mastered them, which have always kept them under heels and which have always used every legislative and administrative means to keep them demoralized and subjected. Their defeat itself will help in wakening them up to a clearer sense of their powers . . . and the present catastrophe is really the defeat and discomfiture of the masses by the classes.

Wacha inquired whether it was true that Dadabhai had refused to accept a sum of Rs. 5,000, offered to him by J. N. Tata towards his election expenses. Dadabhai replied that he had thankfully declined the offer. "I may say," he added, "that the expenses will be more—Rs. 15,000."

To Malabari also he wrote

I am alright about finances. This election cost just as much as usual. It is not merely the cost of the election, but it is the running expense all along which tells heavily.

The reason why he could afford to refuse financial assistance is stated specifically in a letter to Narendranath Sen (October 20):

I thank you for the earnest way in which you have recommended to other people to support me with funds for the next election. But I do not need any money help. I cannot tell you how that is—beyond that there is some silent patriot in India who appreciates the future result of my work and with full knowledge of my position and expenditure has supplied me with all I needed before and would need for some time to come. Had I not found such a friend of India, I should not have been able to do what I have done, however little or much it may be, and what I may hereafter be able to do.

What I need is not money. It is an awakening of earnest patriotism among the people at large—an understanding of their degraded position and poverty—and a continuous loud cry and agitation for remedy till the British public is convinced of this awakening and that the Indian people mean business.

That silent patriot who supplied all his needs for the future was, it appears from other correspondence, though his name is not specifically mentioned, His Highness Maharaja Shri Bhagvat Sinhji, the Thakore Saheb of Gondal, who was his life-long friend and admirer.

During the time Dadabhai sat in the House and, subsequently, during the days he was sitting on the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure, there was a desire generally expressed in India and England that he should be knighted. In a letter to Fram Daduna (August 12, 1897), Dadabhai deprecated the idea and stated that those who were moving in the matter could not understand how embarrassing it would be to him.

It is best to pause here to notice Dadabhai's firm efforts to discourage such attempts in subsequent years. The Shah of Iran also wished to decorate Dadabhai. The news was conveyed to him by Bhownaggee. Dadabhai wrote in reply:

With reference to the intimation about His Majesty the Shah's intention of manifesting his goodwill towards our community of which we had such exceedingly gratifying assurance from His Majesty—by bestowing upon me a decoration, I fully and deeply appreciate the great compliment which I should feel in receiving it. But as the prevailing sentiment in my mind at present is not to have any personal decoration, I think it will be as well for me to keep to this sentiment. I repeat that I feel the compliment and honour most deeply and gratefully.

After his retirement from active public life, the proposal was often revived. Dadabhai would not, however, agree to his name being submitted for any decoration. His life-long friend Wedderburn was no stranger to his emphatic views on the subject, but

even he was seized, in the year 1911, with a feverish desire to see Dadabhai knighted, not because Dadabhai needed such a recognition, but because Wedderburn thought that an honour to him would mean an honour to the Constitutional Party in India. Lord Sydenham, the Governor of Bombay, was only too willing, but would Dadabhai consent? Wedderburn wrote to Gokhale. Soundings were taken, as would appear from Wedderburn's own letter to Gokhale (October 19, 1911):

I am glad that you agree with me as to the public benefit, both to the Government and the Constitutional Party, from an honour conferred on Mr. Dadabhai. I thought we were in a fair way to accomplish it, but now there is a bolt from the blue. I learn *privately* that Mr. Dadabhai has intimated his unwillingness to accept any honour. This is quite a natural feeling, looking to the independence of his character and entire absence of self-seeking, but in the public interest I think we should ask him to overcome his reluctance. I always knew that he had no wish for recognition, rather that it was distasteful to him, but looking to the great public benefit from an honour to him as the father of the Constitutional Party and a believer in the ultimate justice of the British people in India, I thought he would acquiesce. It would, as an act of statesmanship, rank with Lord Hardinge's reception of the Congress Deputation

Dadabhai, however, adhered to his decision, and the spectre of knighthood, which had disturbed his peace of mind from time to time, was at last laid at rest!

## CHAPTER XXVI

# INDIAN EXPENDITURE COMMISSION

WE have already recorded several difficult tasks essayed and accomplished by Dadabhai, but his prolonged and vehement struggle for instituting an inquiry into the financial administration of India, his arduous work on the Royal Commission appointed for the purpose, and his efforts to get others to convince the Commission of the need for reform, beat all records. He could never have done justice to his work on the Commission had he been simultaneously saddled with Parliamentary duties. The loss of his seat in the House of Commons was, therefore, a blessing in disguise, it set him free to concentrate all his time and energy on that all-important work for the better government of India.

Before the dissolution of Parliament and before the Commission was constituted, he had written to Wacha (January 31, 1895):

Do you think you can get leave and come here for six months to work here for preparing material for the Select Committee in conjunction with Morgan Brown (Secretary to the British Committee of the Congress) and for lecturing about, as the British Committee may direct?

Wacha could not then embark on that mission. Now, however, relieved of Parliamentary duties, Dadabhai was free to draw up a case himself. He merely wanted friends in India to send separate statements supporting the case.

Lord Welby was a capable and considerate Chairman. The other members of the Commission were all seasoned statesmen, devoid of anti-Indian bias. Nevertheless, from the commencement Dadabhai feared (and his apprehensions came true) that with Wedderburn and Caine he was in a minority of three. At the

very first meeting there was a sharp cleavage of opinion as to the scope of the subject-matter referred to the Commission. It was suggested by some of his colleagues that the apportionment clause had for its object only the settlement of the disputes between the India Office on the one hand and the War Office and the Admiralty on the other. Against thus restricting the inquiry Dadabhai entered an emphatic protest. In the course of the debate in the House of Commons, on his amendment to the Address, he had made it clear that he was praying for an adjustment of the financial relations between the United Kingdom and British India with regard to all the expenditure incurred in England and in India. Moreover, the Secretary of State for India had stated that Government were quite willing that such an inquiry should take place. In the terms of reference to the Commission there were no restrictions, nor was there any reference to the particular matters in dispute between the India Office and other departments of the Imperial Government. Yet the majority attempted to whittle down the inquiry.

"The beginning does not augur well," wrote Dadabhai to Wacha on May 26. In the next letter (June 6), he stated:

All such Royal Commissions have a great disadvantage that however honest, sincere, and independent any particular member may be, it is difficult for him to see things from an Indian's point of view or put himself in the Indian's place.

Officialdom seemed to be bent upon thwarting him, as it had thwarted his efforts to get redress in the matter of the Civil Service examination. He too must be ready for a counter-attack. Hence the following request, in a further letter to Wacha, for the supply of munition (July 25):

If you can possibly send me some specific instances in which the Government officials approach persons to get evidence on their side—send them.

In the midst of this preliminary work for the great inquiry the Civil Service question was not shelved. Nay, it formed part of the inquiry itself. Dadabhai was determined to raise the issue once

more in connexion with the investigation. At the same time pressure was to be brought continuously on the authorities in England to give effect to the Resolution of the House of Commons. He kept on exhorting friends to overwhelm the authorities with monster petitions. For instance, in a letter to Raja P. Mohan Mukerjee, it was urged

All India and Bengal especially must unceasingly make efforts to demand and obtain justice. We must have thousands of petitions to the House with hundreds of thousands of signatures, continuous agitation in India—meetings all over the country—and the British people and Parliament must see that India is *earnest* and *dissatisfied* and *will not cease agitating* till the reform is made—and then we may be sure that it will be made and justice will be done to us.

Similar letters were sent to several prominent Indian politicians and circular letters to all the Congress Committees and other organizations in India.

Though I am out of Parliament at present, do not on any account slacken your efforts to go on sending petitions from all parts of your district on simultaneous examinations. They will be duly presented and when the time comes for action they would be exceedingly useful.

Dadabhai then began writing a series of notes expanding the case for India as argued by him in the House of Commons. The first note was placed in the hands of Lord Welby on October 17. In it he expounded the scope of the inquiry, quoting chapter and verse to show that the intention was to ascertain whether the existing system of the administration and management of expenditure, both in England and in India, secured sufficiency and efficiency of services, and all other satisfactory results “at an economical and affordable cost”, whether there was any peculiar inherent defect, or what Bright called “fundamental error,” in that system, and whether there was any necessity or otherwise of every item of expenditure. Then he quoted the authority of the Duke of Devonshire (Lord Hartington in 1883) to show that



India was insufficiently governed. A country insufficiently governed could not be efficiently governed. As regards cost, so great an authority as William Hunter had stated that India could not afford to pay for the increasing amount of administrative labour at the English rates, which were the highest in the world, and that she could only afford to pay for it at her own rates, which were, perhaps, the lowest in the world. The inherent drawback in the prevailing system was the evil inseparable from the governance of a remote foreign dominion. To ascertain the necessity or otherwise of the expenditure, every item of it in both countries had to be considered.

The second part of the reference to the Commission related to the apportionment of the charges between the Governments of the United Kingdom and of India for purposes in which both were interested. Dadabhai desired that all the purposes in which both the countries were interested should be first ascertained, that every item of expenditure incurred for such purpose should be examined and that it might then be determined how far each of the countries was interested therein. The next thing to do, he suggested, would be to ascertain the comparative capacity of each country, so as to fix the right apportionment. Then followed a long dissertation on the extreme poverty of India, the alarming expenditure and the crushing burden of taxation. No less an authority than Gladstone had admitted, as far back as 1870, that India was a country "too much burdened," and, in 1893, that her expenditure, especially the military expenditure, was "alarming." "From the beginning of the British connexion with India up to the present day," complained Dadabhai, "India has been made to pay for every possible kind of expenditure for the acquisition and maintenance of British rule, and Britain has never contributed her fair share (except a small portion on few rare occasions such as the Afghan War) for all the great benefits it has always derived from all such expenditure from the revenues of India."

On a perusal of this formidable note, Cairne wrote to Dadabhai:

I concur in all your views. . . . We shall, I am afraid, be headed off at every turn with the ridiculous "policy" restriction. If it is

stretched too tightly, as I fear it will be, it is quite possible we three may have to leave the Commission in a body as a protest

Thus from the commencement the pro-India trio appear to have anticipated trouble. Already they had lost all hope of converting the majority to their views, and the following extract from Dadabhai's letter to Wacha (November 7) shows that he had even visualized a minority report

A supreme effort is to be made now in this Commission. We may not get another opportunity of the kind for a generation. Whether the Commission accepts your representation in part or full, or not at all, will be of no consequence. It will be an antidote to any mischief of the Report of the Commission and will enable us to make our own Minority Report with effect. The great necessity is that we must be supplied with complete proof of each point in the letter or any other points you may think proper to take up. From what has transpired it seems that an effort is made to show that the administration in all departments as it exists at present is all that can be desired.

Then followed instructions to Wacha that he should draw up a memorandum of what it was proposed to establish and send it to the principal centres for filling up the details and for the adoption of such a representation in each Province either by a recognized organization or at a public meeting

No administration or management of expenditure (he added) can ever be satisfactory unless those that supply the means have their will in and management of it. In other words, the Budget must be completely debatable, as in this country, in a Legislative Council in which the Indians themselves are fairly represented

Similar instructions were given to Surendranath Banerjea, Veera Raghavachariar, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Motilal Ghose, and numerous other Congress workers.

The very next day he wrote to Wacha

In addition to what I have written to you in yesterday's letter I want to say that I particularly desire to have every information of facts and figures and cases to support my propositions about

the insufficiency and inefficiency of the services and the inconvenience, trouble and expense caused thereby to the people.

Then came a suggestion from Caine that the British Committee of the Congress should ask the Congress to select two witnesses to give evidence before the Commission. Dadabhai asked Wacha to send a *précis* of the evidence for the information of the Commission with the names of the witnesses so as to reach him before January 20, 1896. The names of Pherozeshah Mehta, Surendranath Banerjea and Ghose were suggested. Dadabhai wanted Wacha as a third witness, if he was not one of the two selected. Dr. K. N. Bahadurji was then in England—one of the few medical men of the day who took part in politics, with nationalist tendencies. He was nominated a witness by various medical organizations in India to give evidence on the questions affecting the Indian Medical Service. Wacha was prepared to give evidence; and his name was submitted by Wedderburn.

There was another eminent Indian whom Dadabhai longed to see pitted against the official hierarchy—Mahadev Govind Ranade, the distinguished jurist, economist, and social and political reformer, highly esteemed for independence, impartiality and sobriety of views. Would he go?

Dear Ranade (wrote Dadabhai imploringly, June 18, 1896), you have an opportunity now to do the greatest service you can to our poor country that you will have in your life-time. Come and support me in your own able way. . . . If this want of honour, honesty and righteousness of the British Indian authorities—and the terrible misery as its result—be made clear to the British public by such authority as of you three (Mehta, Wacha and Ranade) supporting me—what may not happen to our good? . . . You are distinctly admitted as in the position of an independent non-official—with the authority of the impartiality and independence of your life. Your position being thus admitted, you have nothing to shrink from in giving an emphatic and clear view of the deplorable condition of India.

It seems Ranade was prepared to make the necessary sacrifice to serve his country, but the Government of India did not favour

the idea of a High Court judge being asked to give evidence before the Commission. They suggested that the Bombay Presidency Association might be asked to select a witness, and it appointed Wacha. With Wacha went Gopal Krishna Gokhale as the representative of the Deccan Sabha. The other Indian witnesses were Surendranath Banerjea from Bengal and G. Subrahmanya Aiyar from Madras. But before they crossed the seas Dadabhai had put in several notes for the edification of his colleagues.

In the second note, submitted in December 1895, Dadabhai submitted that it was necessary for the Commission to know the results of the administration and management of the Indian expenditure as reflected in the moral and material condition of India. With that end in view, he forwarded the correspondence he had with the India Office regarding statistics showing the poverty of the Indian masses. The third note furnished statistics required by Act of 1858, but not fully supplied by the Government of India.<sup>1</sup> After submitting elaborate tables concerning production and distribution and after citing eminent authorities, Dadabhai maintained that he had shown that one of the results of the prevailing system was the extreme poverty of the mass of the people of British India, "suicidal to British name and rule, and destructive and degrading to the people of British India."

An analysis of the terms of reference as regards apportionment of charges was the subject-matter of the fourth note submitted on February 15, 1896. He put a moderately just apportionment of charge in this way:

India and England should pay all salaries which are to be paid to their own people, within their own limits, respectively, i.e. England should pay for all Englishmen employed in England and India should pay for all Indians employed in India; and as to those in one country who are employed in the other country, i.e. Englishmen employed in India, and Indians employed in

<sup>1</sup> The enactment provided that the Indian authorities should lay before Parliament every year a statement prepared from detailed reports from each Province and District in India, in such form as should best exhibit the moral and material progress and condition of India in each Presidency.

England—let there be some fair and reasonable apportionment between the two countries—taking, as much as possible, into consideration their respective benefits and capacity of means. .

As to pensions, a reasonable salary being paid during service in India, no pensions to follow, so that, when Europeans retire from India, there should be no charge on England for pensions, the employees having made their own arrangements for their future from their salaries. By this arrangement India will not only pay all that it would pay for a government by itself, supposing the English were not there, but also a share in the cost in India for what England regards as absolutely necessary for her own purpose of maintaining her empire in India.

As regards the navy, Dadabhai maintained that "on no ground whatever of justice could India be fairly charged any share for it, except so far as it fell within the principle of actual service in Indian harbours."

Let India have complete share in the whole Imperial system and then talk of asking her to contribute to Imperial expenses. Then will be the time to consider any such question as it is being considered in relations with Ireland, which enjoys short of Home Rule, which is vital to it, free and full share in the whole Imperial gain and glory—in the navy, army, and civil Services of the Empire. Let all arrangements exist in India as they exist here for entrance into all the Imperial Services here and elsewhere and it will be time and justice to talk of India's share in Imperial responsibilities.

Another important question the Commission had to consider was that of expenses incurred outside the limits of India. Every war carried on beyond the frontiers of 1858 was distinctly and mainly for Britain's Imperial and European purposes. It was solely to keep her own power in India, still India did not want to ignore indirect and incidental benefit of protection enjoyed by her and would be willing to pay a fair share according to her means. "What was it," asked Dadabhai, "if not shabby, to throw the expenses of Prince Nasrulla's (Shah of Iran) visit upon the Indian people?"

Then there was the mutiny of 1857. The causes were the mistakes and mismanagement of the British peoples' own authorities; the people of India had not only no share in it, but were actually ready at the call of the authorities to rise and support them. The British supremacy was triumphantly maintained, but what was the reward for the people? The whole payment to the last farthing of the cost was inflicted upon the people. Let Lord Northbrook say how shabbily they were treated.

"The whole of the ordinary expenses in the Abyssinian expedition were paid by India, the argument used being that India would have to pay her troops in the ordinary way and that she ought not to seek to make a profit out of the affair. But how did the Home Government treat the Indian Government when troops were sent out during the Mutiny? Did they say, 'We don't want to make any profit out of this?' Not a bit of it. Every single man sent out was paid for by India during the whole time, though only temporary use was made of them, including the cost of their drilling and training as recruits until they were sent out."

Since then you have in a marked way been treating the people with distrust, and inflicting upon them, unnecessarily and selfishly, a larger and more expensive army to be paid for as wholly as the army of the Mutiny, viz., including the cost, or a portion of the cost, of their drilling and training as recruits until they are sent out, though all the troops are in this country, and they form an integral part of the British Army. And the whole expenditure of the frontier wars, including Chitral, is imposed upon the Indian people, though avowedly incurred for Imperial and European purposes, excepting that for very shame, a fourth of the cost of the last Afghan war was paid from the British Exchequer, thanks to Mr. Fawcett.

At Glasgow, on November 14, 1895, Mr. Balfour said: "You all remember that the British Army—and in the British Army I include those Native soldiers, fellow subjects of ours who on that day did great work for the Empire of which they are all citizens." This is the romance. Had Mr. Balfour spoken the reality, he would have said, "include those native soldiers, the drudges of ours,

who on that day did great work for the Empire of which they are kept-down subjects" For does not Mr. Balfour know, that far from being treated as "fellow subjects" and "citizens of the Empire," the Indians have not only to shed their blood for the Empire, but even to pay every farthing of the cost of those wars for "our Empire" and "our European position," that however much these Indians may be brave and shed their blood for Imperial purposes, or be made to pay "cruel and crushing tribute," they are not allowed any vote in the Imperial Parliament nor a vote in the Indian Legislative Councils on their own financial expenditure, that their employment in the officering of the army beyond a few inferior positions of Subadar Major or Jamadar Major, etc., is not at all allowed, that they are distrusted and disarmed—are not allowed to become volunteers, that every possible obstacle is thrown and "subterfuge" resorted to, against the advancement of the Indians in the higher positions of all the Civil Service, and that the simple justice of allowing Indians an equality to be simultaneously examined in their own country, for Indian services, decided by Act and resolution of Parliament, and solemnly pledged by the great Proclamation, is resisted by every device and subterfuge possible unworthy of the English character. Is it not a mockery and an insult to call the Indians "fellow subjects and citizens of the Empire" when in reality they are treated as under-heel subjects?

After this scathing indictment it was a relief to Dadabhai to relate, in his fifth note, an episode in the British Indian Administration which reflected credit upon all concerned, namely, the maintenance of an Indian dynasty on the throne of Mysore.

This being once settled (said Dadabhai), though against all previous opposition, and necessitating the withdrawal of almost all Europeans from the Services, all the authorities and officials concerned, to their honour and praise, instead of putting any obstacle in the way, or trying to frustrate the above intentions, discharged their trust most loyally, and with every earnestness and care and solicitude to carry the work to success. The Blue Books on Mysore from the despatch of 16th April, 1867, to the installation of the late Maharaja in 1881, present a bright chapter

in the history of British India, both in the justice, righteousness and statesmanship of the decision, and the loyalty and extreme care of every detail in carrying out that decision with success and satisfactory results.

That the financial prosperity of the State was secured not by resort to new taxation in any form or shape was a fact which Dadabhai commended for special consideration to the administrators of British India.

In the very nature of things the present system of administration and management of Indian expenditure in British India cannot ever produce such results, even though a Gladstone undertook the work. Such is the result of good administration in a native state at the very beginning. What splendid prospect is in store for the future if, as heretofore, it is allowed to develop itself to the level of the British system with its own native services, and not drauded as poor British India is. . . . The obvious conclusion was that the only natural and satisfactory relations between an alien's supremacy and the people of India could be established on that basis alone. The natural system had all the elements of consolidation of British power, of loyalty and stability, and of prosperity of both countries, whereas under the system prevailing in British India all human instincts were tending against the alien rulers and must inevitably end in disintegration, rebellion and disaster. No grapes from thistles!

The sixth note asked the Commission to bear in mind that all the loans made to India formed part of the imports and were already paid for and included in that part of the exports which was equal to the total imports. "The foreign capitalists," he added, "not only make profits with their own capital, but they draw even their capital from the taxation of the poor people themselves."

Then followed a statement (November 3, 1897) on the admission of Indians to the covenanted Civil Service in India. In it Dadabhai traced the whole history of the question down to the Resolution of Parliament in 1893.



A Conservative (Sir Stafford Northcote) proposed, and a Liberal (Duke of Argyll) passed the Act of 1870 to do some justice. A Conservative (Lord Cranbrook) insisted upon carrying it out. A Liberal (Lord Kimberley) began to undermine it, and another Conservative (Lord Cross) gave it the death-blow—though, to the humiliation of the House of Commons, the Act remains on the Statute Book. What faith can the Indians have on any Act of Parliament? To-day something given, to-morrow snatched away; Acts and Resolutions of Parliament and Proclamations notwithstanding.

Once more Parliament did justice and passed the Resolution, in 1893, for simultaneous examinations, to share the same grievous fate as all its former enactments. And the Indian Executive thus stands proclaimed the supreme power over the heads of all—Parliament, People, and Sovereign. . . . In connexion with India generally, the Englishman (with some noble exceptions) deteriorates from a lover of liberty to a lover of despotism, without the slightest regard as to how the Indians are affected and bled. He suddenly becomes a superior, infallible being, and demands that what he does is right, and should never be questioned. (Mr. Gladstone truly called the "argument and law of force" as the law and argument of the present Anglo-Indian rule.) "Our boys" is his interest. The "boys" of others may go to the dogs, perish or be degraded for what he cares.

Dadabhai then submitted the correspondence which he had carried on with the War Office and the Admiralty, respectively, on the admission of Indians to Commissions in the British Army and to Commissions in the Royal Navy. The gist of the argument in this correspondence was that by excluding Indians from Commissions in the British Army and Navy the authorities had laid down a rule inconsistent with the Act of 1833 and the Proclamation of 1858. His ninth and final note furnished a table showing expenditure on wars beyond the Indian frontiers and containing, so to say, the official confession of the cost of the Forward Policy to the people of India.

Dadabhai was not content with merely placing his statements before the Commission. They might or might not be taken into

count in compiling the report. If, however, he appeared before the Commission as a witness and urged the issues raised by him in those notes, the Commission would, he thought, be compelled to deal with those issues. In that hope he subjected himself voluntarily to the fire of cross-examination as a witness.

There were several passages-at-arms between the Chairman and the witness. To cite one instance.

The Chairman asked: "What is it that you want? Do you wish to sweep away the whole English scheme?"

"Yes, as it is," was Dadabhai's reply.

"I want to know whether you wish to get rid of it bodily?"

"There you misunderstand me."

"What proportion would you keep?"

"There is no proportion there. You must serve the double purpose both of maintaining the supremacy in a very remarkable and a very efficient manner and at the same time the people must feel that they are governed by themselves."

"I merely wish to ask you whether you propose to retain any part of Civil Service—the European Service?"

"Only the highest portion such as the Viceroy, the Governors, the Commander-in-Chief. Let us have the whole Civil Service, leaving alone the high level of the Europeans as the controlling power."

"Then you would have the Viceroy, etc.?"

"These certainly."

"No Englishmen beneath them?"

"I do not see any necessity for others."

"And by degrees you would evict them all?"

"We may go gradually higher up."

"But the history of India is that the people have been continually slaughtering each other?"

"What have you done here? What is the history of Europe? We do not want to go back, because we have learnt as you have learnt."

"Is your recipe for reviving the prosperity of India to let loose the Pindaris?"

"Not necessarily. Those days are gone. . . ."

"Do you remember what Sir Madhava Rao, Prime Minister of Baroda, said to Lord Roberts on the subject of India for the Indians?"

"What did he say?"

"He said it would be like loosing the bars of the cages of the Zoological Gardens and letting out the animals, that very soon they would all be dead except the tiger—the tiger was, I believe, the war-like people of Northern India."

"Is this the result of 150 years of British rule that we are not civilized enough to observe law and order?"

It was, on the whole, a brilliant performance. The severity of the cross-examination gave him the opportunity of driving home all his points and, incidentally, impressing his colleagues with his grasp of the facts and figures bearing on the issues involved.

Since the year 1896, many a change has taken place in the financial administration and management of India and in the machinery of government. It is, therefore, scarcely necessary to go into the details of the evidence placed before the Commission or of its recommendations. A few points of conflict between the majority and minority may, however, be noted. The majority held that the growth of expenditure had outstripped the normal growth of the tax revenue by Rs. 5,555,000, but that if the increased cost of exchange, amounting to Rs. 13,800,000 included in the expenditure, were eliminated, the normal growth of the tax revenue was more than sufficient to meet the largely increased demands of military and other services. On the question of apportionment of charge, the majority report recommended that the United Kingdom should contribute £50,000 towards the yearly charge of the office of the Secretary of State, one-half of the military charges of the fortress of Aden and of the charges of the Legation and Consulates in Iran. It also formulated principles which should guide, although they might not govern, the payment for Indian troops employed out of India, e.g., that India had no direct and substantial interest in the employment of forces in Europe, in Africa, west of the Cape of Good Hope, and in Asia, east of China; that

she might have a modified interest in questions affecting the East Coast of Africa as far as Zanzibar, and the African Islands in the Indian Ocean except Madagascar, but that she had a direct and substantial interest in questions affecting Iran and Afghanistan and the coasts and islands of Arabia and of the Persian Gulf and port of Central Asia adjacent to the borders of India or Afghanistan.

Dadabhai, Wedderburn, and Caine were not satisfied; they submitted a separate report. The question to be considered was whether the Government of India, with all its machinery, had or had not promoted the general prosperity of the people in its charge and whether India was better or worse off by being a province of the British Crown. The scope of the inquiry was, however, so restricted as to ignore the broad lines which it should have followed. Important factors had been omitted from the calculations as, for example, the additional heavy burden imposed upon the tax-payers by enhancements of land assessment, by changes in Abkary regulations and by the closing of the mints. In dealing with the dispute between the India Office on the one hand, and the War Office and the Admiralty on the other, the Commission appeared to have assumed that the India Government represented the India of the Indians, as though India were an independent country, having its own resources at its own command, and able to negotiate for its own conditions and terms! Arguments and conclusions based upon such an assumption must necessarily be fallacious.

Instead of supporting the majority's proposal for the appointment of a Comptroller and Auditor-General, the minority report recommended the annual appointment of a Select Committee of the House of Commons to inquire into and report upon the financial condition of India. In order to give the Indian tax-payer an opportunity of making his voice heard, it recommended that the non-official members of the Viceroy's Council should have the right to move amendments and divide the Council upon the provisions of the Budget. It also recommended that a sufficient number of representative Indians should be nominated to the Council of the Secretary of State. It further proposed that there

should be at least one Indian in the Executive Council of the Viceroy.

The question of the Services was once more put forward with all the wealth of detail which Dadabhai had at the tip of his fingers. The Congress of 1898 had passed a special resolution to the effect that the constitution of the Higher Civil Medical Service of India was anomalous, indefensible in principle, injurious in its working, and unnecessarily costly. The time had arrived when in the interests of the public, of medical education, and of the advancement of medical service and of scientific work in the country, also in the cause of economic administration, the Civil Medical Service should be reorganized and wholly detached from the military service. Dr. Bahadurji had supported this demand in his evidence, and the minority report recommended the proposal as deserving of consideration.

As regards allocation of cost, it appeared to the minority from certain speeches made by Lord Curzon and Lord Kimberley that the main instruments by which British rule in India was maintained were a strong European military force, a European Civil Service, and a contented Indian population. Without those combined factors the conditions necessary to British rule could not be produced. The maintenance of those instruments of British rule being clearly an Imperial interest, the Imperial Exchequer should bear a proper share of the expense involved. What was a proper share? The minority were of opinion that Britain should pay for all British employed upon Indian work in Britain, that India should pay for all Indians employed in India, and that as regards British employed in India and Indians employed in Britain, the expenses should be shared equally. To make the British share still more moderate, the cost of all European Agency on behalf of India, wherever employed, might be divided half and half between India and the Imperial Exchequer.

Wars carried on beyond the Indian frontier were an indivisible part of the great Imperial question. It followed that the whole cost, ordinary and extraordinary, of such wars should primarily be borne by the Imperial Exchequer, India contributing in

proportion to the benefit accruing to her for the protection of her frontier or other circumstances arising out of the war. The only case in which, perhaps, an exception might be made was that of defending the Suez Canal if actually threatened. India might in that case be called upon for a contribution, provided, however, that other British Colonies and dependences in Australia and the Far East also paid their share.

There was no note of despondency in Dadabhai's letters to his friends concerning the Commission's report. He felt that his labours had not been thrown away. Such as it was, the report had taken cognizance of some of the inequities against which India had to contend.

"It is enough for the present," observed Dadabhai in a letter to Hormusji Wadya (May 27), "that this is the first occasion on which Indian views had free expression and we owe that to Lord Welby. It is in itself not a little gain."

In thus being content with ever so small an advance and looking even on that as a gain worth having, the Grand Old Man of India was acting in consonance with the maxim of Marcus Aurelius and following in the footsteps of the Grand Old Man of England.

An important domestic occurrence of the period was the wedding of Dadabhai's second daughter. She insisted that her father should be present to give her away. He pleaded inability to leave England, as the work of the Commission demanded all his time and attention. She, no less dogged than her father in her resolutions, put off the event *sine die*! At last came from her "ever-loving father" a pressing appeal (November 5, 1896), which made Dr. Maki Dadabhai Naoroji relent and consent to become Mrs. H. M. Dadina.

Nothing can delight me more than to be present at your wedding. But I am helpless. I have undertaken a duty which, I have no doubt you will agree with me, I *must* perform. This is nearly the last work of my life, and its fruition as far as it can go. Unless you wish me to throw away the whole work of my life, it is impossible for me to stir. . . . The manner in which the

people of India received me and for which we all were so glad shows what I owe to them. To the difficulty of my work Mr. Bhownaggee has become a great addition. No, dear, give up the idea of my presence. As it is not quite certain that I can go in the winter of 1897, it is useless, my dear child, to wait.

Another letter of the period to "Dears All" (July 2, 1897) throws a side-light on the state of Indian womanhood even after fifty years of progress in female education:

I had no idea that the bicycle was for Maki. I do not know whether she would like to ride in Bombay or whether people would like to see her ride, or whether any good number of Parsi ladies are riding at present. Considering the profession she is to follow, it would perhaps not be desirable for her to create any prejudice against herself at present.

## BRITISH RULE LACKING BRITISH PRINCIPLES

**E**VEN whilst he was deeply engrossed in the work of the Royal Commission, Dadabhai was mainly instrumental in organizing a vigorous platform campaign in England on behalf of India. For more than forty years he had cherished hopes for a change in the official outlook. For four decades he and his friends, British and Indian, had made unceasing efforts to bring to the notice of the British people the grievances of India and the defects in the system of administration of the country. They had received the sympathy and encouragement of numerous individuals and large audiences throughout the country, but they had failed to create any appreciable impression on those who held the reins of office, whether they were Conservatives or Liberals. The psalmist's allotted span of life was exceeded; the old might come any day, yet he could scarcely see a ray of hope for his motherland. Was he to give up the struggle? On the contrary, he was determined that the last days of his life should be devoted to a more extensive and more intensive campaign throughout the United Kingdom, demanding for India British rule on British principles.

His letters during the period breathed the same spirit of staunch determination to continue the fight. To J. N. Tata he wrote on May 27, 1897: "Nothing can be accomplished without perseverance and doggedness. Because the Government has resisted it (the proposal for simultaneous examinations), there was the greater necessity to fight out the matter with greater and more energetic persistence and noise. . . . Because Government will not grant, therefore give up, is not the policy which will get



anything for us." Similarly, in a letter to Prithivi Chandra Raj, he wrote on October 29: "We have to do much pioneering work. We cannot expect fruit at once. . . . It will be absurd to shrink now." In another letter to G. Subrahmanya Aiyar (September 4), he said: "Keep up, as you say, the spirit of the people—do not be cowed down. That's the only way to deal with Englishmen."

Bubonic plague broke out in Bombay in 1896; it was spreading throughout India in 1897. To the chronic disease of poverty and the periodic tragedy of famine was thus added another calamity. Oppressed by the thought of such misfortunes and misery of his country, Dadabhai came to ascribe them to the drain of her resources. In his letters to friends in India he observed: "How could it be otherwise, under the present system of rule of 'bleeding' India in crores<sup>1</sup> and crores every year?"

It was the year of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign. In his letter to the Queen (February 5), he could not help striking a jarring note:

The most striking consequences of the utter violation of Her Majesty's most sacred pledges and of Acts and Resolutions of Parliament are the extreme impoverishment of the people of British India and the infliction upon them of all the scourges of the world war, pestilence, and famine. May I hope to look forward to a beneficial change in the present great occasion of Her Majesty's reign?

To James Gordon Bennett, proprietor of the *New York Herald*, he wrote (February 18):

I feel much puzzled that while so much sympathy has been aroused about the perishing millions of my poor countrymen in India, your paper, so foremost in humane work, has not opened a subscription in the United States

Prince Ranjitsinh of Jamnagar, who had made a name for himself on the cricket field of England, was then busy arousing

<sup>1</sup> A crore is equivalent to ten millions

empathy for the suffering people of India. To him Dadabhai addressed the following words of advice (March 4):

You have to distinguish the appeal for the relief of the present calamity from the necessity of preventing such calamities in the future, and if you can in some way impress upon your hearers their great duty to see that this is looked into, you will do a service both to England and to India. You will also be able to impress upon them that during the last fifteen years since the last great famine this country has added to its wealth from India four or five hundred millions sterling and that from that great abundance England is bound to give in abundance. Even one per cent will mean four or five millions. There are people who do not, and cannot, come to relief works—women, children, old and infirm, and, more pitiful still, the respectable who would on no account seek relief and would prefer to starve and die—here private charity is most needed.

Dinsha Wacha and Gokhale arrived in London in April 1897 and stayed with Dadabhai at Cambridge Lodge, Southfields. Surendranath Banerjea and Subrahmanya Aiyar, the other two Indians deputed to give evidence before the Royal Commission, were also in England at the time. Taking advantage of the presence of these practised speakers, Dadabhai and his colleagues organized "platform campaign" throughout the United Kingdom, to bring effectively to the notice of the British public the actual condition of India and the wrongs of the Indian population which cried aloud for redress. Dadabhai was one of the prominent speakers at lectures delivered at South Lambeth, Sunderland, Clapham, Edinburgh, Hastings, Lewisham, and other places. Public meetings were also held in Yorkshire and Gloucester and the Ealing Division. The time of the year was not favourable, nevertheless the speakers drew large audiences.

The campaign for the year 1897 culminated in a Resolution passed at a conference of Indians resident in the United Kingdom, held under the auspices of the London Indian Society, on December 28, at Montagu Mansions. The resolution was

moved by Dadabhai from the chair. In spite of its portentous length, it seems necessary to quote at least some paragraphs to show what emotions were then swaying the mind of the veteran mover

That of all the evils and terrible misery that India has been suffering for a century and a half, and of which the latest developments are the most deplorable, Famine and Plague, arising from ever-increasing poverty, the stupid and suicidal Frontier War and its savagery of the wholesale destruction of villages, unworthy of any people, but far more so of English civilization, the unwise and suicidal prosecutions for sedition, the absurd and ignorant cry of the disloyalty of the educated Indians, and for the curtailment of the liberty of the Indian Press, the despotism—like that of the imprisonment of the Natus—and the general insufficiency and inefficiency of the Administration, of all these and many other minor evils the main cause is the unrighteous and un-British system of government which produces an unceasing and ever-increasing bleeding of the country, and which is maintained by a political hypocrisy and continuous subterfuges, unworthy of the British honour and name, and entirely in opposition to the wishes of the British people, and utterly in violation of Acts and Resolutions of Parliament and of the most solemn and repeated pledges of the British nation and Sovereign

That unless the present unrighteous and un-British system of government is thoroughly reformed into a righteous and truly British system, destruction to India and disaster to the British Empire must be the inevitable result

That Indians desire, as their highest patriotism and best interests, the continuance of British rule, and, as British subjects, they demand that such British rule must be based on British principles and British institutions, on British citizenship and not on existing despotic, un-British and selfish principles, of which the present disaster and misery are the natural and bitter fruit.

That, as a necessary immediate instalment of justice, a large portion, if not the whole, of the famine and plague expenditure, and the whole cost of the present unwise Frontier War must be met from the British exchequer, remembering that England drains from India some thirty or forty millions every year.

Lastly, that the Frontier War and Forward Policy must cease and that the whole frontier question be carefully reconsidered so as to render all Afghanistan a powerful and impregnable barrier of an independence-loving and war-like people against any foreign invasion of India.

He had been told, said Dadabhai, that the resolution was touched in very strong language. It was not, however, his language; it was the language of some of the most eminent British statesmen. To take the word "subterfuge," for instance; it was the word of a Viceroy, Lord Lytton, and also of the then Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, who had distinctly stated that the whole conduct of the authorities—and Dadabhai was speaking of the authorities only—had been a political hypocrisy. Lord Northbrook having urged that the Cabinet and the Government of India were bound to act in consonance with the Royal Proclamations, Lord Salisbury had said, "What is the use of talking in this manner? It is all political hypocrisy!" In a private minute, Lord Lytton had stated that the Government had been deceiving the people, that there had been deliberate and transparent subterfuge in not carrying out the Act of 1833 and that they had been doing it intentionally and knowingly. "There is no morality in war," was one of the blunt sayings of Napoleon. Dadabhai could not have been unaware of it, but despite half a century's bitter experience in the school of politics he could not reconcile himself to the fact that the same sweeping negatave was as true of the eternal contest between the rulers and the subjects the world over, particularly where the rulers were alien.

As regards the policy of choking up the natural safety valves for the indignation of the educated classes, Dadabhai said:

Gagging the Press is simply suicidal. There never was a greater mistake than to prosecute Mr. Tilak and those poor editors who were, perhaps, not known beyond their villages. This was a new departure from the principles on which British government was conducted. Now you are introducing the Russian system under which a man can be arrested and imprisoned and sent away without trial and without reason being given.

On the day after the lecture Hyndman wrote to Dadabhai:

Let me offer you my sincere congratulations on your resolution and speech at the Indian Conference. . . . There can be no doubt whatever that the blundering in India has now brought matters to a crisis and that the Government must begin to look facts in the face. That there is great alarm at what we may call by courtesy "head" quarters there can be no question—but fear is a very bad counsellor, and it is deeply to be regretted that our principal statesmen deliberately refused to act, or even to think, years ago.

About this time, it caused some uneasiness to Dadabhai's friends to find him seeking the support of Socialists in his crusade. The *Hindu Patriot* considered it a dangerous policy. Dadabhai, on the contrary, considered it a good fortune to have such allies:

Do not be prejudiced (he said, April 8) that it is the Socialists who are helping us. If you know thoroughly the enormous and various difficulties we have to move Englishmen in the Indian cause . . . you will realize the value of the help we are getting from the Socialists, and that is mostly because Mr. Hyndman is at their head. . . . When he first wrote his article on the "Bankruptcy of India," he had not dreamt of socialism . . . it is an unexpected good fortune that the Indian cause has been taken up by a powerful and advancing organization to whom the future largely belongs. We have not got the means of creating such an organization; no existing organization yet helps us. This democratic organization is the only one . . . that has taken in hand our cause.

While, however, he fully appreciated the value of Hyndman's whole-hearted support, Dadabhai stoutly rejected his persistent advice and appeals for a change in the method of agitation. Hyndman believed in making a vigorous stir. Year after year he grew more impatient and more bitter in his condemnation of the spineless agitation of Indians.

At the house I was staying at with my wife at Tunbridge Wells (he wrote to Dadabhai in one of several undated letters) I met two young Indian barristers, Mr. Tyabjee and another,

who both know you. I told them I thought a great opportunity was being allowed to slip by in not getting up a plain-spoken memorial to the India Office on the subject of this Famine in India. . . . I also said that I think it a mistake to ask for charity instead of demanding justice. It cuts the ground from under the feet of those who, like myself, are doing all that is possible to help India. Nothing will be done unless some serious agitation is set on foot. I knew Lord George Hamilton *intimately* in old days. He is merely a smart tool of his own and other aristocratic families working for the Imperial right to extort wealth. He will do nothing unless he is frightened of the consequences of his supineness. Another word I must say. I cannot help feeling contempt for the Indians here and in India who, instead of seriously taking up their own cause in a serious way, leave all the work to be done by a man of yours (*sic*), and pass such a silly resolution of congratulation to the Queen as was passed at the Indian National Congress the other day. Congratulations for what? For having ruined India for two or three generations to come? It is pitiful. Men in high positions have said to me, "Where is the evidence of discontent, Mr. Hyndman? Where is the cry for justice from the people of India themselves? If the people are so poor and oppressed, as you say they are, surely we should hear a little more of it than we do hear!" What answer can I make to such a challenge? There is no answer. For outside of yourself what is any native of India doing? Even the paper *India* itself is a poor, clique-edited, badly written sheet which doesn't interest even me. It is time to be up and stirring, if any good is to be done. I will help, and so will our organization and *Justice*, as much as possible; *but* "Providence helps those who help themselves."

Even Martin Wood's powerful advocacy of India's cause gave little satisfaction to the irate Socialist.

I have got a letter from Mr. Martin Wood (he wrote, February 1, 1897). He doesn't understand my method of getting up an agitation at all. He is an excellent person, but he is more likely to provoke tears and sleep than excitement on any subject.

In another letter he told Dadabhai that it was absolutely necessary that they should put their heads together so as to decide

how to make a vigorous stir. They met, not once but often, and the discussions must have been most exciting. Dadabhai has not left behind any note about the interview, but his letter to Hyndman, written after the conversations, gives us an idea of the fundamental difference of opinion between them.

With reference to my visit to you on the 16th instant, I have carefully considered the matter again and I remain of the same view as I then expressed to you that after reading your article in *Justice* I cannot any more work with you and the S.D.F. on Indian matters. My desire and aim has been not to encourage rebellion but to prevent it and to make the British connection with India a benefit and blessing to both countries, which it can certainly be, but which unfortunately has not been the case to India, owing to an evil and unrighteous system of government being persisted in by the executive authorities, in spite of the wishes of the sovereign, the people and the Parliament of this country to govern righteously.

A letter to Motilal Ghose (July 23) also makes Dadabhai's position clear:

I, of course, cannot join him (Hyndman) on the line that India may rebel. . . . Our stand is confidence in the British people, to persistently but constitutionally agitate till we inform the British public of the evils of the present system of government and get it reformed on righteous lines. They take a view of the British rule and express it which I cannot prevent. But whatever view they take or express, one thing is clear that their motive, as they say, is the good of India and England, their own country, which Mr. Hyndman considers as identical.

Hyndman did not press his views any more for a while, but he reverted to the charge early in the following year.

What do you judicious people gain (he asked, February 19) by your moderation? What does your journal *India* gain by its dullness that can be felt? To the naked eye, and even to the microscope, nothing! They just kick you and pass sedition acts over you, and lie about you, even more than they do with us. We, at least, have the satisfaction of chasing them, denuding

them, making them look ridiculous, and driving them into furious anger. Moreover, we are getting ready for the inevitable crash which is coming—not in India alone. Suave, moderate gentlemen don't get much attention when "the band begins to play," so they might at least be heard now—but they aren't.

Dadabhai, however, wrote in reply (February 22):

All that you say is true, but Indians cannot do yet what you say. You should realize *their* position in every respect. . . India represents Indians, not Englishmen, and India can only speak as Indians should. . . . The Government are now openly taking up a Russian attitude, and we are helpless. The mass of the people yet do not understand the position. John Bull does not understand the bark. He only understands the bite, and we cannot do this.

Despite this difference of opinion as to the methods of agitation, their personal relations were as cordial as ever. Dadabhai had the gratification to join in the movement for a complimentary dinner to Hyndman in recognition of his public services on behalf of the people for twenty-five years. At the dinner, given on May 11, 1898, Dadabhai responded to the toast, "International Solidarity and Progress."

To the wrongs of India one more was added by the prosecutions instituted against journalists for sedition. It was part of the policy of repression pursued by the authorities as a counterblast to Indian unrest. Dadabhai regarded the prosecutions as a "political blunder." "They are doing the very thing they desire to prevent," said he in a letter to Wacha (September 30). "Fear will lead to such acts which in turn produce the very effects feared. It is a sad thing for India, the weakening of British connexion at British hands."

Later, he unburdened his mind at some length in another letter to Wacha (April 28, 1898):

The Natu case<sup>1</sup> is very unfortunate for Government themselves. It is the greatest blow they have given to British power and

<sup>1</sup> The Natu brothers were imprisoned without trial in connexion with the riots that broke out in Poona owing to the measures taken by the authorities for the suppression of plague.



prestige. The idea of the insecurity of liberty will now never leave the Indian mind. A generation of reparation and good behaviour would hardly repair the mischief. It has hurled the British power down the hill half a century. Russia's name loses its terrors. Well, it is a pity. Is retribution coming so soon, I wonder!

The reports of the excesses committed during the Frontier War also caused much anguish.

Thus savage warfare on the frontier on the part of the British destroying all villages (he wrote feelingly to another friend, December 9, 1897) is a great disgrace to the civilization of Britain, and it is the destruction of one of the finest races of the world for thousands of years. It is a great crime against humanity. The British love independence, but is it not strange that they destroy others for loving independence like them?

Another incident, known as the "Apology Incident" in the career of Gokhale, cast a gloom over the Congress circles. When he was in England in connexion with the work of the Welby Commission, Gokhale, who had yet to grow in political stature and wisdom, received letters describing the ravages of the plague then raging in Poona and the high-handed action of European soldiers appointed to inspect private houses. One of the epistles conveyed to him the report then current among the Poona people that two women had been violated by some soldiers and that one of the victims had thereupon committed suicide. He related the story to a small Committee of members of the House of Commons, to whom he had been introduced by Wedderburn; he also gave an interview on the subject to a representative of the *Manchester Guardian*. The Bombay Government cabled to say that the report was a "malevolent invention." There were no proofs to substantiate the story. Not only Gokhale but also his friends, Dadabhai and Wedderburn particularly, had to look small. Returning to India, Gokhale called upon his informants to come forward with evidence. They had nothing to urge in corroboration of the report. It was all hearsay. He refused to divulge their names and took on himself the responsi-

bility of circulating the unfounded story. The only honourable course open to him in the circumstances was to tender an unqualified apology to those whom he had defamed. It was a bitter pill to swallow. The apology he tendered was, however, full and complete.

Now came castigation from unexpected quarters. Gokhale's colleagues and the Indian public generally felt humiliated by what seemed to them to be an abject apology. Even his friends in England were puzzled as to the need for the withdrawal of his statements in the manner in which he had retracted them. Gokhale's explanation was given to Dadabhai in his letter of August 6:

I have written to Sir William explaining the circumstances under which withdrawal of the allegations became the only honourable course open to me. . . . Briefly, the situation was this. Before my arrival here, the government had ceased to be British government and had assumed the role of Russian government. Arrests and deportations on the charge of disloyalty had spread such profound panic in Poona that any kind of substantiation was out of the question. Government, moreover, had decided not to hold a public inquiry into the complaints by a Commission. Retraction, therefore, was the only course left open to me. In the step I have taken I have bowed to circumstances and have acted in accordance with the best advice available. I know my action has done much harm to the cause which is so dear to the hearts of us all and which I meant to serve all the while.

Dadabhai sent him a soothing reply, asking him to dispel the thought of retirement from public life, but offering at the same time a few words of advice:

You are young, you have a long, earnest, and by no means easy work before you. "Never say die." Do your duty perseveringly. You are excitable and I shall be consoled even for your present troubles if you can now, after the present painful experience, learn to be cool and calm and to consider a matter before acting. . . . The cause you have to work for is beset with difficulties. . . . But do not despair.

How kind of you (said Gokhale in reply, September 16) to write as you have done! I was prepared for a much more severe reproof, and you have written in such gentle and encouraging terms! All I can say is that all my energies will now be devoted to making amends for what has happened.

All the while, Dadabhai was in communication with Congress leaders, particularly with R. N. Mudholkar, to make the session of 1897 a success—and such a great success it was that he felt proud of Mudholkar.

You and your Province have good reason to be pleased and proud. . . . You have managed all with great tact and with your head on your shoulders. You have now shown what Indians can do. You know how solicitous I was that you should show on this occasion that Indians can stand on their own legs, and you all should have greater pride that you have helped yourself without the extraneous prop of an M.P. from here or any Englishman.

To the Secretary of the Mahajan Sabha of Madras also he preached the gospel of self-help (July 29):

We must now show that we can help ourselves and do not need to lean upon others. We must give up the idea of having Englishmen as our Presidents. We must have Indians as Presidents. . . . We must seek our promising young men and, though they may not be much known, the very fact of becoming a President adds one to the list of men of position and influence.

Throughout that era of repression, Dadabhai was visualizing a titanic struggle between the people and Government. In a letter to Wacha (March 3, 1898), he said:

We are thrown back many years; the authorities are openly throwing aside their mask and hypocrisy of benevolence, and the people, on the other hand, are beginning to feel that something is wrong, and a fierce struggle is in prospect. Let us meet it as it comes, with coolness.

The annual dinner of the London Indian Society was held on November 1, 1898. In proposing the toast to the Empress and the Royal Family, Dadabhai said: "While expressing our attachment

o the Queen, we cannot help feeling that her noble proclamations for the welfare of her Indian people have been interpreted by her Ministers in exactly the opposite light to that in which we view them."

We still believe (he added) that the British people have a conscience. We look to them for justice, and I hope the time will come, although I may not have the good fortune to live to see it, when all things will be changed and Her Majesty's best wishes realized

In proposing the toast of India and the Indian National Congress, Professor A. F. Murison said

Sir W. Hunter was not regarded as a feather-headed man, even by *The Times*, and yet he had declared his belief that the general programme of the Congress would actually reach accomplishment by the end of the century. As the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church, so the vituperation of officialism and the lackeys of officialism contributed to the impulse of the Congress movement

Dr. Sarat Mullick ventured to dip into the future and to assert that the time would come when the President of the Indian National Congress would be consulted by the Governor-General and an Indian himself would hold the high and important position of Governor-General

While carrying on this agitation, Dadabhai earnestly believed that he was fighting not merely in the interests of poor India but also in the interests of the British Empire. "Injustice will bring the mightiest on earth to ruin"—the slogan for which he was indebted to Lord Salisbury—were no mere empty words. Those words, he apprehended, spelt the Nemesis of the British Empire, and he was never weary of warning British friends of the danger inherent in the policy pursued by their countrymen in India. It was the same feeling of apprehension that made him write to George Freeman<sup>1</sup> (February 11, 1898)

Really the prospect for the British Empire does not look very bright if the present infatuation for keeping other nationalities

<sup>1</sup> A sympathetic writer on Indian affairs in the *New York Sun* and other journals

under heel is persisted in. It is the most effectual way in which they are digging their own grave. At present in India they are going from bad to worse and wiping off whatever merit there was in the British name by Russianizing the system by repressing freedom of speech and the liberty of the subject.

Writing to the same friend, six months later (August 25), about the growing sea-power of England, to which Freeman had referred, Dadabhai pointed out that when Asia would be connected with Europe by railways, such power would not be of much avail.

England's only strength (he added), if she is wise enough to see it, against all Europe, is in the contentment, prosperity, and desire of India herself to keep up England's connexion. England can then command a resource of strength that can defy all Europe. . . . India is England's greatest strength and its greatest weakness, as she would have it.

Once more, while writing to this friend, he sounded a warning (November 24):

I am afraid the race question will become in time a burning one. The backward races in other parts of the world seem destined to have a bad time. The European greed will be too much for them. But the Indian question will be a terrible matter for England, if she does not look out. Once India is fully roused, and in these days of rapid development of political and moral forces this may come much sooner than we can expect, it will be impossible for England to hold her own firmly.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### STIRRING THE BRITISH PUBLIC

**D**URING the month of November 1898, Dadabhai went campaigning in Lancashire. It was part of a country-wide campaign planned by the veteran crusader. Special attention was paid to Lancashire, as much harm had been done to India in the interests of Lancashire trade, and as Dadabhai believed that much real good could be done, both to Lancashire and India, if the Lancashire people realized what the real condition of India was and what could really promote the cotton trade between England and India. The first lecture of the series was given under the auspices of the East Manchester Liberal Association, in Chorlton Town Hall, on November 14. "Are you aware," asked Dadabhai, "that the drain of wealth from India acts as 'protection' of Indian industry? It is a well-known economic law that a tribute—and forced payments to another country have the economic effects of a tribute—not only takes from the tributary nation the amount paid but also raises against them the price of all foreign goods."

Dadabhai then addressed several meetings successively at Castleton, Chorley, Atherton, and Knutsford. W. A. Chambers, Romesh Dutt, and Bepin Chandra Pal, all excellent orators, took part in the propaganda. The British Committee of the Congress was also active. W. S. Caine gave a lecture on the Indian National Congress. Everywhere the apostles of Indian reform were hailed with delight. Dadabhai told the audiences that his firm had been in Lancashire for over twenty-five years and that, therefore, he could claim to know something of Lancashire and the ideas of its inhabitants. John Bright had advised his countrymen that there were only two ways in which Britain could get good out of India for themselves—one of these was by

plunder, and the other by trade. British people, said Dadabhai, would prefer the second alternative. For that, however, India must be rich, whereas the value of the whole produce of the people was not more than Rs. 20 per head per annum. What could be expected from such a people as regards trade?

The argument went home to the business men present. The grievances of India, which were brought to their notice, evoked sympathy for her people, and the proposed reforms seemed to them to be just and reasonable "If," said a Manchester merchant, in proposing a vote of thanks to Dadabhai, "we could have some more addresses like that of Mr. Naoroji, there would be no excuse left for the ignorance about India which now prevails" Almost all the chairmen and speakers at subsequent meetings expressed the same sentiment. The question before them was: how to enable Indians, who were their wards, to develop their lives and policy in the best way for themselves.

Dadabhai then called attention to the treatment meted out to Indians in South Africa. A public meeting was held, on November 22, in the Friends' Meeting House, Manchester, under the auspices of the Manchester Society for the Protection of Native Races. The Rev J. S. Moffat moved "That this meeting welcomes the formation of the Manchester District Society for the Protection of Native Races, and pledges itself to do everything in its power to further the objects of the Society."

In seconding the resolution, Dadabhai spoke of the hardships of the British Indian subjects who had gone to South Africa. Then he asked them to look into the conduct of things in India. The civilization of that country, he reminded them, was "a thousand years old." Its people were advanced in arts and sciences when people in England were running about the woods without clothes. The disabilities which hampered the Outlanders in the Transvaal were rife in India.

Another series of meetings in Lancashire was then arranged for Dadabhai. Between 12th and 15th December Dadabhai addressed large meetings at Stretford, Oldham, Failsworth, and Rossendale. The burden of the song was the same. Lancashire

complained that India did not take more of her goods. The total exports to India from Great Britain and Ireland did not exceed 1s. 6d. per head of the population of India. . . . "Make it possible for the 250 or 300 millions of India to take £1 per head of British products, and it would be out of the power of England to supply the demand!"

A good many other meetings were thus addressed in all parts of England.

During the year 1900 there was another famine in India, the worst experienced during twenty-five years. Dadabhai was again actively at work. He delivered an address at Edmonton, April 29. There was, he said, a chronic state of famine in India. Even in years of average prosperity and average crops, scores of millions had to live on starvation diet. They could not expect to draw blood from a man day after day and yet expect him to remain healthy. A gratifying feature, however, in connexion with the famine was the attention paid by publicists to the question of the annual drain of the wealth of the country.

In June and July he had a crowded programme of meetings all over the country. British friends also took part in this programme. On June 28 Mrs Charles Mallett gave an address on the Indian Famine, with Dadabhai in the chair. Dadabhai then addressed a garden meeting at Anerley and a meeting of the Metropolitan Radical Federation at Plumstead Radical Club. In his old constituency, Finsbury, he delivered an address to the Lighthouse P.S.A. Society.

Meetings were also held in aid of the Famine Relief Fund. At one of the meetings held at the United Methodist Church, Walthamstow, taking as the text the words of Lord Salisbury, "as India must be bled," Dadabhai affirmed that, despite her grievances, India had been loyal to the British Crown. At the same time he sounded a warning "Do not expect that that loyalty cannot fail "

This was no empty threat. India at the end of the century was not the India of 1852 when Dadabhai had made his first political speech. Everybody knew that there was grave unrest in India, but Dadabhai knew much more. He had heard from Hyndman that



the authorities had been anticipating serious trouble and were at last awakening to the gravity of the situation.

How long do you think (asked Hyndman, January 22, 1900) the present system in India will last? From what I can hear, there is a growing feeling among the dominant classes that we are on the verge of a serious crisis

Three days later, he confirmed the report:

The impression that there is a growing opinion as to the probability of a serious crisis in India, partly economic, partly revolutionary, comes to me from Anglo-Indian Officials and their letters home as well as from conversations reported to me, in which the new Governor of Bombay took part. The main fear is of some sort of rising. I have seen two letters from men now in India, and high up too, to their relations here which breathe spirit of distrust, not to say alarm, through their pages. In particular, one man writing to his daughter declaims against the imprudence of the Government in inviting the troops now locked up in Ladysmith from India at all. He says that the general feeling among Europeans is one of coming trouble.

Very few, even in India, appreciated what Hyndman was doing almost daily for their country, but he too, like Dadabhai, continued his labours with singleness of purpose.

With the single exception of yourself (he wrote, March 29) I never receive a word of acknowledgment from anybody. Yet, again, with the exception of you, I have done more for India than any man living. However, that doesn't matter. Humans are pigs anyhow, in India as in England. But I object to starving pigs, so I go on all the same.

Then he commenced harping once more on his favourite theme.

Yes, I saw your memorial in *India*. I consider it much too humble in tone. After all, though politeness is well, after compliments and so forth, you are a representative of 250,000,000 of people—a great position and one which in my judgment calls for even haughty language on your behalf. One of the commonest charges brought against India is that its natives are "servile." You

are very far from that. But the tone of your memorial jars on me, I must say. I remember being with my old and honoured friend—Giuseppe Mazzini, the great Italian—one day in his poor rooms in the Fulham Road. We were talking in the easiest and pleasantest way. To us was shown in an emissary from King Victor Emmanuel. You should have seen the old man straighten up and have heard him talk. It was one power talking to, and almost down to, another. And, what is more, the emissary treated the old man with a deference that I don't believe, great nobleman as he was, he would have shown to the Czar of Russia or the Queen of England. It was the consciousness of his own capacity and the force behind him which gave Mazzini that standing. The time has gone for imploring, if ever it existed. You have the right to speak out and you will gain more by it.

Had this advice anything to do with the change in the tone and temper of Dadabhai's agitation in England during the succeeding years? Once more Hyndman had a fling at *India*.

I look through *India* weekly. But how dull, how desperately dull and uninteresting! Do pick up some able young man and give him charge.

In his opinion, Wedderburn, too, was frightfully dull.

It is very unfortunate (he observed, April 7) that Sir W. W. is such a bad and unimpressive speaker. Most of the people on our side unluckily lack the power to put things in a clear, vigorous and interesting way.

In the same letter he stated:

Thank you for your letter. We have to cheer up each other. I am going on and I think, at last, we are making way slowly. The efforts made by the enemy to silence us are the best possible evidence that we are producing some effect.

This letter also gives an indication of the daily effort of Hyndman to help India:

I have sent my article, with a short addendum on the debate in the House of Commons, to *Die Neue Zeit*. I have posted also a letter to the *Manchester Guardian*.

Here is another letter (July 23), showing how intensely anxious he was to get a move on.

Undoubtedly, August would never do for meetings, but we have then to begin our arrangements for October. We must all work in our own way. If I have succeeded—and I have succeeded—in rousing the attention of a considerable part of the English people to the mischief of our rule in India, this has been done and similar things have been done in all ages, not by mild examinations of truth but by vigorous attacks and the use of strong language. I can quite understand that nice gentlemanly mediocrities who, like the Walrus, “greatly sympathize,” don’t approve of and would gladly boycott me. But I know very well what I am doing and these half-baked personages will have to reckon with me on home as well as Indian and foreign affairs before long. I am glad you think there is a movement where *above all* there ought to be movement. You deserve to live long to see some portion at least of the change for which you have worked so hard and so long.

Thus did his irrepressible friend go on stirring Dadabhai from day to day to self-assertion. One more letter (July 24), and we shall have done with the Hyndman correspondence of this period.

You are, indeed, thankful for small mercies! As against the £250,000 the Government, instead of giving a grant-in-aid, are inflaming the drain by yet another loan. Even so they will draw £11,000,000 this year. At this rate it will take another century or more to drive the thick end of the wedge. Your only hope is a general shock or overturn. But the men who are pretending to work in favour of India to-day—and the greater part of it is pretence—would be as sorry to see such a break-up of the infamous capitalist system as Lord George Hamilton or Sir Henry Fowler. The Government is not in the least afraid of moderate remonstrances nor care for the recommendations of Royal Commissions—*ex. gr.* : the Royal Commission on Housing the Poor, 1880.

On October 13, 1900, Dr. Mulhick gave a reception at Hotel Tudor in honour of Dadabhai. The special object was to afford a

number of young Indians interested in the National Movement an opportunity to meet and greet the Grand Old Man who was, day after day, getting more and more anxious about the struggle that lay ahead, the struggle which called for many new recruits to relieve the members of the old guard. There was a very interesting assemblage of Indians and British friends of India. Romesh Dutt, Digby, and several British friends recalled some of the main lines of the patriotic work which Dadabhai had pursued with commendable courage and steadfastness and with notable success. Digby's comparison of Dadabhai with John Bright deserves special notice.

The only English statesman with whom he (Dadabhai) could be at all compared was John Bright, with whom he had many characteristics in common. Bright started a political career, holding certain definite views, and at the end of a long life he found that practically the whole people of the country had accepted them. Where he began, there he finished. So too with Mr. Naoroji. What he advocated years and years ago he was still advocating, and there was constant proof that at last his views were gaining acceptance. . . . Mr. Naoroji had done that for Indian politics which steam-power had accomplished for traction purposes; he had opened up entirely new lines of thought and action; he had demonstrated the only way in which India could once more become a great and prosperous nation.

Dadabhai was delighted to have the opportunity of appealing to the youth of India to come forward and to relieve old men who had all their lives been working on behalf of India. In undertaking that task, they would, he assured them, enjoy many advantages which the older men did not possess.

We had to work (said he) in the face of the darkest ignorance of Indian matters, but now we have accomplished the labours of the pioneers; and now that light has penetrated the darkness, we hold that the time has come when the burden should be shifted on to your shoulders. . . . What is the task before you? You have to expose the real secret of the poverty of India. I have, time after time, dealt with reasons and excuses given for that poverty,

such as land taxation and decadence of native industries. But these, after all, are only red herrings drawn across the path. . . . As long as the bleeding goes on, there can be no hope for India.

There would be difficulties in their way, he added, but they should not despair. The English Press had taken up the Indian problem with all seriousness; before long it would become one of the great domestic questions before England. In the Royal Commission's report there was an acknowledgment of injustice to India. Thus a beginning had been made; the British conscience had been aroused, and the outlook was far more hopeful than it had ever been before. "Go doggedly forward!" said the veteran soldier to the would-be recruits. "Learn a lesson from John Bull himself."

Dadabhai had robust faith in the youth of India—rather unusual for grey heads controlling national organizations. His heart went out in admiration for the young men who were determined to offer resistance to the long-tolerated hauteur and high-handedness of the bureaucracy. When even his own lieutenants such as Mehta, Wacha and Banerjea were getting impatient of what appeared to be extremist views and rebellious attitude of young Indians in certain quarters, their hoary-headed mentor wanted more and more young men to come forward and hold aloft the torch of freedom. Certain Anglo-Indian newspapers had, a year before, criticized young India in scathing terms. Referring to their outbursts, Dadabhai remarked, in a letter to Romesh Dutt (May 2, 1898):

As to the cry of the Anglo-Indians about young men, it is always their dodge. . . . We shall have to do our work with young men if Indians are to speak here at all, and youth is not to be despised. It is the enthusiasm of youth, with some direction, that has always carried important changes in the world and will always do so. It is these youths to whom the future belongs. We are now passing away; recruits must be prepared to take our place. Despising them as mere youths is a great mistake. Let us guide them.

Six months later, writing to Chambers, whom he had invited to address Indian youths resident in England, he wrote (October 5):

Several of these young men are rather touchy and it will require all your usual tact to handle them in giving them any advice . . . You may take this opportunity of impressing upon them that, as residents in this country, they have a great duty and responsibility towards their country. Any well-directed effort *here* will always be far more effective, as this is the fountain-head where the chief work *lies*. It is exceedingly necessary that a strong Indian association or society should exist here, that is to say, that the Indian Society should consist of all the residents as members and that it should be well supported financially. Every Indian resident here can certainly spare a guinea a year for the sake of his country.

The time had come to organize the activities of ardent youths devoted to the cause of the motherland. Missionaries were needed everywhere to serve India and propagate the gospel of freedom. This idea was put forward in a concrete form to Gokhale in a letter written a few years later, when Dadabhai saw the youth of the country responding cheerfully, in ever-increasing numbers, to the call.

For the purpose of inspiring the people with the desire for understanding the duties and rights of British citizens (said he, October 1905), each province should furnish a band of young, well-educated men to become the missionaries of this work and to devote themselves under suitable organization to do it.

Side by side with the work to be done in India there must be vigorous propaganda in England. We cannot accomplish our object by working only in India or only in England. They are two halves and by their combination only can the whole work be done. . . . The tide is with us. The English people and Press are beginning to understand the wrongs of India. Asia is waking up. The Isles of the East are becoming like the Isles of the West, and we may fairly expect that our Emancipation is not far off. My only word is—never despair.

A notable manifesto was issued over the signatures of Wedderburn, Hume, and Dadabhai on October 19, 1900, addressed to the President-designate of the Congress at Lahore. It passed under review fifteen years of Congress work and marked a new stage in the history of that organization. It was a critical stage—a parting of the ways. Whether the constitutional movement should develop into its full usefulness, by drawing together the rulers and the ruled and by promoting the welfare of both India and England, or whether the efforts that had been made should end in disappointment and reaction, would depend, said the illustrious trio, upon the attitude and action of the Indian people. "We, who were among its originators," they observed, "have now well-nigh completed our work as pioneers; we have given the lead to the younger men and must look to them to take up in larger measure the burden of the work."

The Congress had tried to remove the tendency to underground discontent and secret conspiracy, which was a danger necessarily attending an administration conducted by foreigners on autocratic lines. The official attitude towards the organization was, however, one of disapproval and suspicion. Despite all obstacles the Congress had accomplished its object to obtain solidarity of public opinion. It held the field as a national representative assembly. However vehemently it might have been first assailed, the Congress views on questions affecting India, such as the forward policy beyond the North-Western Frontier, the plague regulations, the famine grant and the financial relations of England and India, had prevailed. The Royal Commission had unanimously found the charges placed upon India to be unfair to the extent of a quarter of a million sterling per annum. Accepting the finding, Government had conceded to India a small measure of financial justice.

It was the old, old story of the shield—silver on one side and gold on the other. Much work remained to be done to present both the sides to all concerned. India was lying prostrate from accumulated misfortunes. All available forces had to be brought together in order to raise her up and lead her again into paths o

prosperity. The first step in that direction was to ascertain, by searching inquiry, the causes of her downfall and to devise remedies suited to her peculiar economic condition. The work in England was great and difficult, the workers were few and were overtaxed both as to physical endurance and financial resources. That was why Wedderburn was driven to retire from Parliament to economize his resources for direct work on behalf of India. The times were critical. By hard, earnest work and united purpose, the Congress might constitute itself a valued adviser to the Government of India and an influence in England tending to strengthen the Empire. On the other hand, if the necessary sacrifice and self-denial were not exercised, if the constitutional effort were allowed to lapse from want of courage and constancy, the work of years would be thrown away and a danger would arise that the physical sufferings of the masses might lead to counsels of despair. "Against such a conclusion," declared the three stalwarts, "we, who have given our best years to the service of India, will, to the last, use our best efforts in the interests alike of India and England "

The little Somerset town of Shepton Mallet was honoured, on November 7, by a visit paid by Dadabhai at the invitation of Mr and Mrs Chambers, parents of W A Chambers, to whose championship of the cause of Indians Dadabhai paid a warm tribute. He was sometimes taxed, said he, with not speaking enough about the good England had done for India, but he could not pay England a higher compliment than that he should be desirous that her connexion with India should continue for a long time. So far as the rule in India was good rule, and something like British rule, they were grateful for it, but their misfortune was that un-British rule was far in excess of the good British rule. "The White Man's burden," as Kipling called it, meant to Indians a very different thing from what it did to the white men. To the Indian it meant that the burden was the white man upon the Indian's shoulders. The Indian was willing to take his fair share of the burden, but was it fair to put upon his shoulders



the whole charge of what was to him a foreign service inimical to his interests and perhaps even injurious to him? This was only a prelude to other speeches in the same key.

"The Indian Famine: Its causes and remedy," was the subject set down for discussion at the weekly meeting (November 24) of the St. John's Literary and Debating Society, Kennington. The principal speaker was Dadabhai. The remedy was to be found, said he, in two words—honour and justice. There was not the slightest necessity that India should suffer in order that England might gain. If only the right policy were adopted, India could be made again prosperous and, at the same time, England would reap ten times the benefit she had had from the connexion.

On December 5, at the Mildmay Radical Club at Stoke Newington, Dadabhai delivered a lecture on Indian subjects after an exhibition of vocal music by a number of young ladies, members of the Mildmay Singing Class. "If present conditions continued," he averred, "if Indians were treated as slaves, an explosion must come. Let Indian subjects be treated in the same way as British subjects—that is all I ask."

On the first day of the first year of the twentieth century the Commonwealth of Australian Colonies was inaugurated. It was an event of vast importance to the British Empire; to Dadabhai, as an Indian, it afforded food for reflection. Why was it that a very small part of the British Empire, with a population of less than five millions, had been progressing during the last century by leaps and bounds until it had become one of the most flourishing portions of the earth, while the great Empire of India which had been connected with the British nation more or less for two hundred years, and which had been controlled by most highly paid administrators, was in a most disastrous condition and was reduced to the state of the poorest country in the civilized world?

Thanks to the lesson which the United States had taught England, when they gained their independence, the British Colonies had since been treated justly and righteously. Simi-

treatment had not, however, been meted out to India. The declaration of policy had been as good as could be desired. But the principles laid down in the Proclamations were violated and disregarded. There had been bleeding instead of nourishing, and British helotry had been substituted for British citizenship. Dadabhai unburdened his mind on that depressing topic at a lecture he gave on "India" on January 14, 1901, at the Penge and Beckenham Liberal and Radical Club. He had no desire to dwell on the past; he preferred rather to look forward. Would the new century bring a favourable change in policy which would be productive of good results for both England and India? Once more he appealed to the British authorities to pursue a righteous policy.

On January 31, Dadabhai delivered another address on the "Condition of India" at Toynbee Hall, Whitechapel, which was followed by several more on Indian famines and their causes. On March 22 the Castle Street Congregational Chapel was packed to overflowing, when the Castle Street Pleasant Hour Society and the Broad Street P.S.A. assembled to hear Dadabhai on the question of "the Relations of England and India." Dadabhai had then a busy week at Reading. How active he was, despite his 77 years, is shown in the following extract from a letter from Gideon Ashdown (March 1) in the *Reading Standard*:

He rose at 7 a.m. Sunday (February 17), and at 9.30 addressed the Church St. Adult School for 45 minutes; and afterwards was driven by Dr. Hurry to the Abbey Ruins where Mr. Naoroji was treated by the doctor with twenty minutes' interesting description. He indulged in a little rest and after luncheon went to Castle Street at 3 p.m. and addressed upwards of a thousand people, who listened with rapt attention for 50 minutes while the famous Indian orator unsparingly criticized their government of India, showing how they had failed in their duty. He then partook of tea and, as an aid to digestion, proceeded to Bridge Street Assembly Rooms and addressed an enthusiastic body of men and women on education, occupying one hour in speech and answering questions.

At a public meeting held at the North Camberwell Radical Club and Institute, on April 23, Dadabhai delivered another address on the "Condition of India":

It is for you, as electors of your country, you who have the sovereign power in your hands, to see why there has been a loss of thousands of Indians in famines. You have not spent a shilling in the formation of the Empire. The blood that was shed was also Indian blood. You have been regularly draining and bleeding us of millions of money. . . . These millions do not go to make you any better off, they go into the pockets of the capitalists. Britain claims that Britons shall never be slaves, is it her intention that she should make others slaves? You must insist that your representatives in Parliament do India justice

The meeting passed a resolution to the effect that the system of government in India was diametrically opposed to the principles initiated in the Act of 1833 and that the faithlessness of the British Government in this matter was the primary cause of the misery and suffering prevailing in India.

Mainly due to Dadabhai's campaign, the twenty-third report of the National Liberal Federation, which was issued about this time, contained more than one reference to India. The introductory paragraph concluded as follows:

The death, suffering and distress which famine and disease have produced in India are again to be deplored, and the closest examination ought to be made to see if any readjustment of the financial system of India could be devised which might mitigate the recurrence of these national disasters.

The platform campaign was extended even to a pulpit. Through the courtesy of the Rev. John Page Hopps, Pastor of the Free Church, Croydon, who lent his pulpit, on Sunday, April 21, Dadabhai gave a sympathetic audience a harrowing picture of the condition of Indians. "Do not believe me as gospel," said he, "study for yourselves!"

At the Westminster Town Hall, on May 24, a conference of Indians resident in the United Kingdom was held to adopt resolutions regarding the amelioration of the condition of the

Indian people. Dadabhai presided. Resolutions pointing out the fundamental cause of the extreme poverty of India and the exhaustion of her wealth, similar to those adopted at previous meetings, were passed.

Dadabhai also presided at the ordinary meeting of the London Indian Society, held on June 2. A. Das opened a debate on Indian Trade and indicated the need for Indians developing different trades and industries. About this time, Dadabhai received a prospectus of a joint-stock concern, called "Indian Development Ltd." Thanking the Directors for the copy, he said: "I think the correct title for such companies should be 'Indian Exploitation Ltd.'" In elucidation of his comment he enclosed a few extracts from his letter (October 20, 1898) to the Currency Committee.

"British Democracy and India" was the subject of another discourse at the North Lambeth Liberal Club on July 4. On whose shoulders rested the responsibility for the miserable condition of India? "It rested," said Dadabhai, "on the shoulders of the British democracy." He appealed to it to exercise its power and make the British Government fulfil the pledges given to India.

On October 20 a debate was raised on an address, delivered by Dadabhai, on British Rule in India, at the Brixton Literary and Discussion Society. On November 1, he addressed a public conference, held under the auspices of the Liverpool Peace Society, on "India and Militarism." The policy of imperial expansion involved risk of explosion. On the authority of a Parliamentary return, obtained by Morley, Dadabhai stated that the British had waged 110 wars beyond the frontiers in pursuance of an Imperial policy dictated solely by the fact that India was the only part of the Empire which had an extensive frontier adjoining the possessions of a great European Power. Colonel Hanna, an Indian officer of experience, had shown that between 1878 and 1896 the "forward policy" cost Rs. 7,141,000,000. During the period, scores of millions of Indians went all the year round without enough food to eat and millions perished in lean years of famine.

Under the auspices of the Young Scots' Society, Dadabhai gave another lecture on the "Condition of India" in the Oddfellows' Hall, Edinburgh, and yet another on the same subject to the members of the London branch of the Society. At Galashiels, there was one more lecture, and scores of them at different places for three more years. Everywhere he emphasized the urgency of strengthening the British rule in India by reforming it.

On March 20, 1903, Dadabhai visited Portsmouth and delivered an address on "India" under the auspices of the Portsmouth Ethical Fellowship. Lord Curzon had expressed his surprise that India should have resented British capital going out to India. When Britain poured her wealth into America and China, his Lordship never heard those natives complain that they were being ruined. When America flooded England, as she was then doing, with resources of her accumulated capital and commercial genius, none "at home" sat down and bewailed their cruel lot at being bled by foreign brains. Dadabhai retorted that Lord Curzon had suppressed the most important factor, so far as India was concerned. The capital that went out to India was not British capital. It was the wealth first plundered from the country, which went back to India for what they called "development," but what he called despoliation of India's resources.

For whose benefit and for what purpose (he asked) is the development, when all that is produced is carried away to this country? . . . Supposing Great Britain had plundered America and China in the way she had plundered India, and from that plunder it had monopolized the country's resources and brought them to Great Britain, would America and China accept the position as benefit? . . . In the case of America, they brought with them their own capital, and it was welcomed, and so would India, if she were allowed to use her own resources for her own benefit.

Then, coming to the question of the drain, he said, "It was a case of bleed, bleed, bleed continuously, and no time at all for the wound to heal."

An important public meeting, convened jointly by the British Committee of the Congress and the London Indian Society, was held at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on July 30, to protest against the proposal to tax the people of India for maintaining a garrison of British troops in South Africa. Dadabhai moved the principal resolution protesting against the proposal and repudiating the plea that such a force should be paid by India as a reserve in the interests of India. No words, he said, were more often used and abused in official literature than the words "Indian interests" and "Indian needs." Every burden imposed upon the Indian people for British interests was hypocritically believed to be for Indian interests, dust being thus thrown in the eyes of the British public and the world. Then he related how India was bled, and asserted: "Far from being required to contribute to the African garrison, we demand in common justice that the British exchequer should contribute to the cost of the European army in India."

An impartial spokesman on behalf of India on this occasion was Lord Welby, who seconded the motion. After full consideration, he observed, the Royal Commission had pointed out in its report that India had rendered important service to England by repeatedly lending her forces. On the other hand, the two-thirds of the British army stationed at home and in the Colonies constituted a reserve on which India might rely in times of emergency. Judging, however, from the past, India had more frequently aided England than England had aided India. The Commission had, therefore, recorded its deliberate and unanimous opinion that, of the two, England profited more by the arrangements for reciprocal assistance. The claim put forward by the British Government that India should contribute to the English garrison in South Africa was, in Lord Welby's opinion, unprecedented, unjust and unwise.

In the midst of this intensive campaign on behalf of India Dadabhai paid close attention to the question of the treatment of Indians in South Africa. That, however, is an episode which will form the subject-matter of a separate chapter. He was also

actively engaged in combating two great social scourges, the liquor traffic and the opium traffic. He had, moreover, thrown himself into the turmoil of another electoral struggle with vigour and ardour which youth might envy. That struggle will also be described in another chapter. Such activities, at his age, deepened the feeling of veneration with which his countrymen watched his career. It culminated in the decision to celebrate in India, as well as in Enland, the anniversary of his birthday as "Dadabhai Day." The first celebration was held on September 4, 1903; thereafter, till the end of his life, Dadabhai Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm.

It has already been shown that out of the amount raised in the year 1869 for a testimonial to Dadabhai, a small amount had been set apart for his portrait. This amount lay with the secretaries for years, and the matter escaped attention. On the death of the last secretary, however, it was discovered that the amount with interest had increased to Rs. 8,000. With the sanction of the High Court this sum was handed over to three new secretaries to give effect to the resolution of the subscribers.

Before an enthusiastic audience, the portrait was unveiled on November 24, 1900, by Ranade, who was then a judge of the High Court. He described Dadabhai as the best product of British education. In learning and industry, especially in industry, he believed, Dadabhai had no equal. "Englishmen," said he, "should feel proud of Dadabhai as a unique figure in Indian history." The era of British conquest was followed by that of consolidation. Then came the era of reconciliation and reconstruction. On what lines was the work of reconstruction to be carried on by the younger generation? These were laid down in Dadabhai's own words. The people of India should regard the existence and continuance of British dominion in that part of Asia as an unquestionable fact. That was the very foundation, said Ranade, of the whole edifice. But there was another aspect of the problem—"by reason of the conquest and of the con-

solidation the people of India should be raised to a place of equality among the other nations of the earth."

It might be said, added Ranade, that in the work of reconciliation, Dadabhai's "extreme position" had not been so helpful and so serviceable to the cause of India as they might have expected. But anyone who had studied Dadabhai's writings and his speeches would say that such a calumny as that would never lessen the affection and esteem in which the people held him. In his writings as well as in his speeches there was not a single sentence or expression, even the most casual, which could be pointed out in support of the allegation that he had created a gulf which did not exist before.

This was the last public function performed by Ranade before death prematurely laid low that intellectual giant of India. Dadabhai sent from England a letter of condolence to Mrs Ranade through Gokhale. Her reply (February 22, 1901), indicates the feeling of reverential regard in which Dadabhai was held by Ranade.

She knows—what everyone who stood close to Mr Ranade knew well—that the high example set by you of single-minded devotion to the country's cause had exercised a large influence on Mr. Ranade's mind, and throughout his life he used to speak of you in terms which a pupil in India uses in speaking of a teacher



## CHAPTER XXIX

# SELF-GOVERNMENT—THE ONLY REMEDY

**E**ARLY in the year 1904 Lord Curzon committed the greatest folly of his life. Forgetting that the wounds inflicted by the tongue are worse than those made by the sword, in the course of his convocation address at the Calcutta University he made an imputation of untruthfulness against India, ancient and modern.

A new life was then stirring among the people of India; everywhere her educated sons were recalling her great past and longing to regain the place she once occupied in the civilized world. To have insulted, at that psychological moment, the people of a country that had given to mankind great philosophies, great art and a great literature was, to borrow the words of Dadabhai himself in connexion with the partition of Bengal, equivalent to depositing a large store of dynamite under what Lord Curzon himself had aptly called "the pivot of the British Empire."

The whole country arose as one man to protest not only against that insulting speech but also against the general policy of the overbearing Viceroy's administration. Nations are governed by sentiment as much as individuals. The sentiment of the Indian people having been outraged, reason and justice were silenced in the wholesale condemnation of a Viceroyalty distinguished, in the earlier years at least, for great sympathy, sagacity, and statesmanship. Even those who might be called the Tories of India were antagonized by the lofty ruler just as King James II had turned the squires and parsons of his day into rebels. Large and influential meetings were held in Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Lahore, Allahabad, and other places in India, where citizens who

had never before taken any part in politics, citizens who even disliked the agitation carried on by the Congress, stood with the political agitators of the day on a common platform and repudiated most vehemently the aspersions cast upon the character of the people by the representative of the King-Emperor in India. They also condemned in strongest terms the measures adopted during his Viceroyalty.

Dadabhai shared his countrymen's feelings of resentment on this occasion; he rejoiced, at the same time, to find their national spirit thus stirred to its depths. Hitherto he had been crying in the wilderness with a mere handful of colleagues. Now, however, the whole nation was up in arms against the principles and policy under which India was governed. No such event had taken place before in the history of British India. It showed the signs of the times. The seeds he had scattered broadcast were bearing fruit—a New India was rising to view, a New India conscious of her rights and pulsating with fresh ideas of freedom. Reviewing the situation, he thought they were then at the parting of the ways. The future could not be a continuance of the past. The Curzon regime had brought popular unrest to the danger-point. People in India were clamouring for the recall of the Viceroy. Dadabhai does not appear to have encouraged such a demand. As usual, he had no quarrel with individuals. He was out to fight the system which led to misgovernment. He, therefore, asked his countrymen, whilst they were infuriated against Lord Curzon, to go to the root of the matter and to demand an instantaneous change in the system of administration. There were only two alternatives before both the people and the rulers—peaceful evolution of the administration of the country, or explosion.

"Misrule of India" was the subject of his lecture on March 18, 1904, before the members of the Penge and Beckenham Co-operative Society. It was not a wise policy, he told the audience, quoting Lord Hartington, to introduce among Indians European literature, civilization, and progress, and at the same time to tell them that they should never have any chance of taking a share in the administration of their country, except by getting rid of their

European rulers. While England was thinking of the expansion of the empire, he added, "an upheaval and an explosion might, perhaps, take place in that part of it which alone entitled it to the name of Empire."

The demand for self-government followed soon afterwards. Responding to the toast of "The President," at a gathering of the London Indian Society, on June 1, Dadabhai asked the question whether Indians were to remain for ever the hewers of wood and drawers of water, to slave and perish. Without pausing for an answer, he declared:

There is only one remedy to the present dishonourable, hypocritical and destructive system—a system that would break up the Empire, if not saved by a peaceful and prompt revolution. That remedy is self-government under British paramountcy. I earnestly press upon the Indian people to claim unceasingly their birth-right and pledged right of British citizenship, of *self-government*. When this one fundamental remedy will be accomplished, every other evil or defect of the present system . . . would right itself

On July 8 Dadabhai delivered a lecture under the auspices of the West Croydon Social Union, on the "Condition of India." He presented to the audience two pictures: (1) of the best hearts and intellects of America, demanding without pressure that Congress should declare the independence of the Philippines in good time, and (2) of nine-tenths of English people, ignorant of what the real relations between England and India were, showing not the slightest desire and making not the slightest effort to understand the real position. He implored them to think of their responsibilities in the matter.

One of the ways of awakening the British public to its duty was to have a sort of permanent paragraph inserted in friendly newspapers calling attention to the grievances of India. Dadabhai drew up the following paragraph, and it appeared in *India* regularly about this period:

The present system of British rule in India by ever-increasingly plundering and draining away the resources of the people

deliberately produces extreme impoverishment and thereby causes famine, plague, and starvation on an ever-increasing scale for some 200,000,000 people. Further, the present system is dishonourably violating the most solemn and Parliamentary pledges and the declared honest policy of the British people

It is therefore the duty as also the greatest interest of the British people to put an end to the present deplorable and unrighteous system and compel their Government to honestly take steps to introduce as speedily as practicable self-government like that of the Colonies under British paramountcy.

Dadabhai then attended an international gathering of Socialists at Amsterdam. It created a stir in India. He had been lecturing for years under the auspices of varied organizations; his audiences were composed of people belonging to all classes of society; he did not, however, expect much support from the well-to-do classes. His hopes were centred in the Labour force which was growing every day. It was the working class, he believed, that could and would help India considerably. It was, therefore, extremely desirable that the people of India should win that force to their side. Irrespective of that consideration, however, his innate sympathy with labour drew him to the working classes. Testimony of such sympathy comes from two prominent Members of Parliament. Speaking at a meeting, on November 1904, at North Lambeth, the constituency which Dadabhai was then nursing, Wedderburn observed:

There was no section of the House with which he (Dadabhai) was more in sympathy and accord than the labour section. If returned, he would, for all practical purposes, be an additional Labour member.

In a letter to Mr. M. R. Masani (February 19, 1929), Secretary, Congress Socialist Party, India, the Right Honourable George Lansbury, M.P., confirms this impression:

My personal contact with your countryman was entirely political, and I can only say that none of us ever appealed to him in vain for assistance in great public movements organized for the

benefit of the masses. He was foremost in his championship of Home Rule for Ireland and for the great measures of social reform which at that time the Radical party was putting forward. I am quite sure that had he been younger and was now living in this country, he would have been one of the foremost men in the Labour Party. I hope one of these days we shall find another such as he standing for Parliament and standing on the broad basis of international Socialism.

A striking proof of his Socialistic tendencies was given by Dadabhai when at a Conference of Democrats, held on July 20, 1905, held under the auspices of the Metropolitan Radical Federation and the National Democratic League at Holborn Town Hall, he moved, as Vice-President of the League, a resolution demanding the establishment of a universal system of old age pensions, based entirely upon citizen rights and free from the taint of pauperism. He was, besides, one of the few politicians in England who had mastered the subject of British industrialism. Under the title of *The Rights of Labour* he had formulated and published a scheme for the establishment of Industrial Commissioners' Courts and for the recognition and protection of Labour as a property. If legalized, it would have ensured justice to all wage-earners and perpetual industrial peace.

The International Socialist Congress met at Amsterdam from August 14 to August 20, 1904. Delegates from all parts of the world attended the Congress to discuss the question of Colonial Policy, and Dadabhai was received there as an honoured guest representing the people of British India. At the sitting held on August 17 the question of India was introduced by a British delegate, S. G. Hobson, on behalf of the "British Section," and with the approval of the Commission on Colonial Policy. The resolution condemning the system of British rule in India, which he moved, had the familiar ring of the resolutions passed at various public meetings under Dadabhai's lead. It referred to the plundering and draining of the resources of the people, which caused extreme impoverishment, and called upon the workers of Great Britain to enforce upon their Government the abandonment

of the dishonourable system of administration and the establishment of self-government.

The President, Van Kol, a retired Dutch civil servant, and a member of the Dutch Parliament, then introduced Dadabhai to the assembly. In calling upon him to address the meeting, he asked the audience to rise and stand in silence to mark their respect and commiseration for the suffering millions of India. His words were the signal for one of the most inspiring manifestations of fellow-feeling. As Dadabhai walked slowly to the centre of the platform, he had a rousing reception. The delegates, about a thousand, leapt to their feet and stood uncovered before him in solemn silence. Then their thoughts turned from the Indian people to the dignified presence of their representative himself, and they gave him a tremendous ovation. It was a most impressive spectacle—the exploited and downtrodden working men and women of Europe expressing their goodwill and extending their hand of fellowship to the suffering millions of India.

So overpowered was Dadabhai by feelings of gratitude that when he spoke his voice trembled a little, but as he proceeded to lay the case for India before the delegates, it rang clear and resonant from one end of the concert-hall to the other. Most of them did not, before translation, understand a word of what he said, but his delicate features, his refined face, his white hair, and his dignified figure impressed them immensely. The delegates who understood English punctuated his speech with applause, but when the speech was translated into German and French, the Continental delegates were even more emphatic in their demonstrations of agreement and approval of the downright and incisive presentation of the case of the afflicted millions on whose behalf he was speaking. They had no idea that an Indian could be so cultured and so captivating as the venerable man who stood before them.

The burden of Dadabhai's song was the drain of India's wealth and the poverty of the people. What hope was there of a remedy?

This rests (said Dadabhai) in the hands of the working classes. Working men constitute the immense majority of the people of

India, and they appeal to the workmen of the whole world, and ask for their help and sympathy. Let them condemn the wrongs done in India. We constantly denounce barbarities. What does barbarity mean? Does it not mean that, when a savage knocks down a weaker man and robs him, an act of barbarism has been perpetrated? The same applies to nations, and this is the way in which the British Government is treating India. This must end. Imperialism of brute force is barbarism. The Imperialism of civilization is the Imperialism of equal rights, equal duties, and equal freedoms. The remedy is in the hands of the British people. They must compel their Government to fulfil the promises that had been made to India. The remedy is to give India self-government. She should be treated like the other British colonies.

The resolution was carried without opposition. "That means," said the President, "that this Congress brands Great Britain with the mark of shame for its treatment of India."

The report of the Congress was read all over the world, and Dadabhai had the satisfaction that his appeal on behalf of his motherland attracted considerable attention in the United Kingdom. On the other hand, his action in associating himself with the Socialists was severely criticized in the Anglo-Indian Press. Socialism was then, as it is even now, a red rag to it. But it was not so much his participation in the Congress as his vehement impeachment of British rule that roused the ire of many a journalist. *The Times of India* remarked that Dadabhai owed it to himself, if he intended to continue political work on behalf of his country, to explain how his name came to be associated with a charge against the British Government of robbing the people, purposely creating famines and carrying on an execrable and dishonourable system of administration. There were still a good many people in India, it added, "whose respect for Dadabhai would lead them to hope that it was open to him to dissociate himself from that outrageous outburst of continental insolence."

Dadabhai was, no doubt, being driven gradually to extremism, at least in his public utterances. Year after year his criticism of the defects of British rule in India increased in acerbity. It was the

result, clearly, of dire disappointment. As yet, however, he had not lost his faith in British justice, nor did he waver in his adherence to the Congress policy of constitutional agitation. In a letter written to him, Wedderburn had expressed his concern at the growing impatience of young men who ridiculed the idea of India getting justice at England's hands without a convulsion. Dadabhai gave in his reply the reason for their impatience and indicated incidentally what made him adhere to his faith.

The new generation is getting impatient. They cannot restrain themselves, as the passing generation does. The older people have had their eyes opened to the high character of British institutions and they became attached to them. They cannot now readily throw aside their first love or attachment. The new generation have no such sentiment.

To the first love, indeed, he remained steadfastly attached till the last day of his life, although, as we have seen, the course of such love "never did run smooth."

During the first week of November, Dadabhai was down with influenza. He could not, therefore, deliver a lecture on India at North Lambeth which had been announced in the papers. Sir William Wedderburn and Mr. J. M. Parikh, one of the lieutenants of Dadabhai, stepped into the breach. Wedderburn earnestly appealed to North Lambeth to send Dadabhai to St. Stephen's. A series of views of India, ancient and modern, was then presented to the audience, accompanied by a descriptive lecture by Mr. Parikh.

Within a fortnight Dadabhai was fit again to address a meeting held under the auspices of J. P. Heath Lodge of the Sons of Temperance, at Clapham Park. "British Rule in India—Promises and Performances," was the subject of this address. He appealed to the people of Great Britain to compel the Government to redeem the promises so often made and to secure self-government for India.

The Reception Committee of the Indian National Congress sent a pressing invitation to Dadabhai to attend the twentieth



Congress. He could not go, but at his request Sir Henry Cotton accepted the Presidentship of the Congress, and Wedderburn, too, consented to visit India once more and to assist at the Congress. In proposing their toast at a dinner organized in their honour, Dadabhai said that they had requested the two Englishmen to go to India to prove to the Indian people that they should not yet despair, as the British conscience was not altogether lost. Repressive, restrictive, and reactionary measures had been resorted to in India; resulting in widespread discontent. He wished that the rulers would take note of that fact and consider what it meant. An Empire like that of India could not be governed by petty minds. The rulers must expand their ideas and adopt measures to undo the mischief.

"Home Rule in India—Past and Future" was the subject of another discourse at St. Albans in February 1905. This was followed by another on March 16, at the North Brixton Gladstone Club, Kennington. Before the lecture there was an exhibition of lantern-slides, presenting from photographs the state of misery existing in India through famine. One of the slides reproduced upon the screen the memorable words of the Government of India Act of 1833:

That no native of the said territories nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty resident therein shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment of the said Company.

Dadabhai sounded a warning that some great catastrophe would take place if India were not placed in the position of self-governing Colonies. That was New India's aim and claim.

Lord Curzon became more and more unpopular. The division of the ancient historic Province of Bengal into two separate provinces with separate capitals antagonized the entire population. A great protest meeting of Indians resident in the United Kingdom was promoted in London. Dadabhai presided. His address was one of the most stirring and inspiring he had ever delivered during his residence in England.

Indians (he said) have unanimously, earnestly and emphatically declared that the system of rule they are now under should not continue to be. Let us consider what that means. More than 50 years ago—I will not go back to an earlier period of our history—Mountstuart Elphinstone said “It is in vain to endeavour to rule them (the Indians) on principles only suited to a slavish and ignorant population.” And 40 years after in the last 10 or 12 years—we find, not only a continuance of the same old system, but we find it brought to bear on the people with even more energy and more vigour. Some 11 years ago, Sir Henry Fowler distinctly and decidedly showed us that India was to be governed on the principles condemned by Elphinstone. . . . Then followed Lord George Hamilton as Secretary of State . . . He said, “Our rule shall never be popular. Our rule can never be popular” . . . and he has taken very good care that his prophecy shall be fulfilled. . . . But then comes Lord Curzon, and he out-Herods them all. . . . Here, then, we have a clear and distinct issue. Our rulers—the officials—tell us we shall have no chance of ever becoming a self-governing country—that they will not give us an opportunity of preparing ourselves for it. Undoubtedly, the character of the whole of the measures passed within the last 10 years points towards such an intention . . . Now the Indian people have, for the first time, risen and declared that this thing shall not be. Here is a clear issue between the rulers and the people: they are come face to face. The rulers say, “We shall rule, but only as foreign invaders with the result of draining the country of its wealth, and killing millions by famine and plague, and starving scores of millions by poverty, and destitution.” While the ruled are saying for the first time, “that shall not be.” I regard the day on which the first Calcutta meeting was held as a red-letter day in the annals of India. I am thankful that I have lived to see the birthday of the freedom of the Indian people.

The question arose: “What would be the consequence of this open declaration of war between the rulers and the people?” Instead of giving his own views, Dadabhai quoted the words of eminent authorities. John Malcolm had prophesied that “the evil” carried with it the seeds of the destruction of the Empire itself. Thomas Munro had said that it would have been more

desirable that they should have been expelled from India altogether than that the result of their system of government should be such an abasement of a whole people. John Bright had warned his countrymen: "If there be a judgment of nations, as I believe there is as for individuals, our children, in no distant generations, must pay the penalty which we have purchased by neglecting our duty to the populations of India." William Hunter had summed up the gist of one of his lectures in the words: "We should have had an Indian Ireland multiplied fifty-fold on our hands." Lord Hartington had pointed out that the only consequence of exclusion of Indians from the government of their own country could be to make them "desirous of getting rid, in the first instance, of their European rulers."

That is the position (said Dadabhai) in which we are at the present time. Either that evil system must cease, or it must produce disastrous results to the British Empire itself. . . . There is a duty on Indians themselves. They have declared that they will not be governed as slaves; and now let them show a spirit of determination, for I have very little doubt that, if the British public were once satisfied that India is determined to have self-government, it will be conceded. I may not live to see that blessed day, but I do not despair of that result being achieved. The issue which has now been raised between the governors and the governed cannot be put aside.

There was no need, continued Dadabhai, for him to refute what Lord Curzon had said in a spirit of peevishness against the character and religion of the East. He had performed that task before. He rather preferred to give illustrations of the political hypocrisy of British statesmen and administrators and to remind them that they were living in glass-houses and should not indulge in the pastime of throwing stones. On one aspect of Lord Curzon's conduct he had, however, something to say.

He does not seem to realize (said Dadabhai) the responsibility of the position in which he has been placed. He is there representing the sovereign of the Empire—as Viceroy or Second King—the head of a great people, 300 millions in number, who had

possessed civilization for thousands of years, and at a time when his forefathers were wandering in the forests here. . . . His duty as Viceroy is to attract as much as possible and to attach the good feeling of the Indian people to the rule of the British Sovereign. What does he do? By his Acts he deals a deadly blow to British rule, and then, by a peculiarly ignorant and petulant speech, he creates almost a revolution in the whole Empire.

Dadabhai was always ready to give every one his due; indeed, he was sometimes blamed for overdoing it in the case of British people and officials. While condemning Lord Curzon, he recalled that the Viceroy had claims to the gratitude of the people for what he had done during the early period of his administration.

I will certainly mention one circumstance in his favour and to his credit. He made a very firm stand against any brutal treatment of the Indian people by Europeans, and, in so doing, caused dissatisfaction to his own countrymen. In that he really did a service, not only to Indian but also to the whole British Empire. That one act of his shall not be forgotten by Indians. . . .

The crisis has come (added Dadabhai), the people and the rulers are face to face. The people have for 150 years suffered patiently, and, strange to say, their patience has been made a taunt as well as viewed as a credit to them. Often I have been taunted with the fact that 300 millions of Indians allow themselves to be governed like slaves by a handful of people. But the spell is broken. The old days have passed and the Indian of to-day looks at the whole position in quite a different light. Now India is becoming restless, and it is desirable that the Government should at once realize it.

In order that India's restlessness may be more pronounced, Dadabhai encouraged Bengal to keep up the agitation.

The responsibility and the opportunity (said he in his message to his Bengalee friends, published in the *Bengalee*, January 5, 1906) that has fallen to your lot is to show that Indians have a backbone—the staying power to the last. If we can once establish this reputation, half of our fight for self-government will be fought and won. I don't care—I am prepared for ultimate failure—

Bengal may remain partitioned—the boycott may at last end—but it will be a great gain if we can once establish the character for organized union and self-sacrifice. One more important result I am looking forward to. It is the rousing up of the masses, and the present is just the kind of struggle which can accomplish this object. If the people are once roused, they will always be ready to follow their leaders.

Interviewed by a representative of the *Daily News*, in August 1905, Dadabhai said he had known Lord Curzon when he was in Parliament.

I don't deny that he is a brilliant man, but he and Lord George Hamilton have wrought infinite mischief in India, their whole policy being to break down the rising spirit of the Indian people. Now India is quite different from the India of the past. The country is ripe for steps towards self-government.

On November 10 the Indians resident in the United Kingdom entertained Dadabhai and Gokhale at dinner. W. C. Bonnerjee proposed the toast of the evening. In responding to the toast, Dadabhai harped on the same theme. The Colonies were prospering with self-government, India was perishing without it. But, he said, he was "generally of an optimistic nature."

The work of the last 52 years has not been thrown away. Though it may not be my fortune—perhaps it may be—to see our efforts crowned with success, many of you may live to see the dawn of the day of self-government and prosperity for India.

As one of the grounds of his hope for the future, he referred to the declarations of Liberal statesmen such as Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Lord Rosebery, who had declared that freedom was the essence of the British Empire.

After all (he added) great events have been happening abroad, in Japan and Russia, and I do not think our present statesmen will shut their eyes to the obvious result of these great events. In the House of Commons I was supported by the Irish, the Radical and Democratic parties. Outside, we have at present very widely the

sympathy and support of the Irish, and what I may comprehensively call the People's party But I depend most of all upon what I see to-day before me—the union of all classes of my fellow countrymen working together with one heart and with one mind for the great common end. If the whole population of India said once for all they were determined to have self-government—theirs by birthright as well as theirs by pledge—their claim would not be and could not be made in vain.

Dadabhai had spoken (said Gokhale) with that overmastering force of conviction which comes from a life-long and strenuous exertion on behalf of his countrymen. He is the only man who is entitled to speak in the terms in which he has addressed us. It never will be given to another—at any rate for some time to come—to occupy so large a place in the hearts of the people of India and that for more than half a century.

Little could Gokhale have dreamt at that time that it would not take long before there arose another high-souled son of India to fill that place and to lead his countrymen manfully towards the goal of self-government—and that none other than the hero whom he and Dadabhai both admired and encouraged as the intrepid commander of the forces of *Satyagraha* in South Africa, the spirited young barrister of the day, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

A plea for a better understanding between India and England was then put forward at Leicester by Dadabhai in his address on the "Needs of India," at a meeting held on November 24, under the auspices of the Leicester Women's Liberal Association. Millions in India did not know, he sighed, what it was to have a full meal. The fundamental need of India was that she should live free from the yoke of the stranger. Self-government she must have. English pledges and English honour, as well as the birthright of Indians, demanded it. He hoped England would give it with good grace, without loss of time.

## CHAPTER XXX

### A RESTLESS PEN

AS the tongue was alert and active, so was the pen hard at work and unwearied during all these years. Every stroke has its effect; Dadabhai would not miss a single opportunity to interest or influence people, individually or collectively, in the cause of his country. Scarcely a week passed when he did not write to the Press to criticize some high-handed action of Government, to ventilate a grievance, or to correct a wrong impression. A few selected letters out of hundreds pertaining to this period bear testimony to this fact.

*To Martin Wood*

*April 4, 1897.*

The fact is that had Englishmen any such or even a tenth of our grievances, they would not only have spoken hundred times harder words but . . . would have gone to hard deeds.

*To Wedderburn*

*March 24, 1905.*

You need not worry yourself about there being any idea among the young Indians of being able to use force. We have discussions often in the London Indian Society and it is well understood and admitted that use of force is out of the question.

*To Wacha*

*July 27, 1905.*

We are not yet quite prepared to bite, it is true, unless the vice of the rule so much intensifies as to lead people to nihilism. But our present weapon is to bark as loudly as we can and as frequently as possible. The demand that we must have self-government must be ever present and roaring all over India.

. . . Another object it will accomplish is that the mass of the people will be trained in agitation and be educated in the evil and the remedy. *We need to move the masses* to an appreciable extent. The more they try to keep us down, the louder must be our cry, and our cry must be clear and well kept directed towards self-government. Of course, all this is difficult, but it has to be done. A child is helpless, but it has a powerful weapon in crying . . . I am afraid some beginning of nihilism will not be very distant.

*To Romesh Dutt*

*July 5, 1903*

Lord George Hamilton has made a dead set to get the Indians out of the higher services. Things are growing critical. I have every fear that the attempt which Lord Lytton's Government openly made to stop Indians from competing for the Civil Service here, and which Lord Cranbrook nipped in the bud under Sir Erskine Perry's inspiration, will be sooner or later carried out, if the present Conservative Government continue for any length of time. *The time is come when an agitation must be begun for self-government under British paramountcy.* The work will be slow, but every effort needs to be concentrated on this purpose. At my age it will not be my lot to take any long part in this great battle—and I am, therefore, the more anxious to see that younger hands and hearts set themselves to work.

*To Wacha*

*January 12, 1905*

The very discontent and impatience it (the Congress) has evoked against itself as slow and non-progressive among the rising generation are among its best results or fruit. It is its own evolution and progress. . . While there is great necessity for informing the people here, there is as much necessity that the true knowledge of their condition should widely spread among the Indian people themselves. The co-ordination of both is necessary to evolve the required revolution—whether it would be peaceful or violent. The character of the revolution will depend upon the wisdom or unwisdom of the British Government and action of the British people.



July 12, 1906.

I hope the next Congress will make a strong pronouncement as to the absolute necessity of self-government as the only remedy for all India's wrongs and needs. Congress should make a clear distinction between two aspects of its duties. The one, *a complete change of policy* as speedily as possible in the most suitable way, leading to self-government—this is Congress's main work—and the second, the hatefulness of the vagaries and failures of the existing administration. The most important of the two is the first. . . . The whole movement of the Congress must be managed to be backed by the masses.

*To Hyndman*

October 1, 1904.

If you write anything to attack and disparage the Congress, you will weaken and discourage the only body through whom India has to work out its redemption. This will be an injury to India which you do not want to do. I hope, therefore, you will not do anything to weaken the Congress. It has already much to contend against conflicting influences in India itself. . . . Whatever may be your opinion about the deficiencies of the Indian character, your course is to guide and help them to supply such deficiency. In our work, one factor is very necessary—Englishmen themselves to denounce the evils of the present system. One Englishman like you denouncing the system will produce more influence in the minds of the British public. . . . We have to convince and convert the British public and every help is progress towards the object.

*Hyndman to Dadabhai*

February 2, 1905.

Whether you survive me, or I you, it is certain that so long as my pen can write and my tongue can speak, the many scores of millions who are being ground down to death under our merciless rule will not lack a champion, such as he is, in this country. I live now in the hope of seeing the overthrow of our infamous system.

*To Thomas Bell (Jodhpur City)**September 30, 1897.*

My idea is that all British India should be divided up into a number of such States administered by Natives generally. Then the people of British India will prosper like the people of the well-administered Native States. This is not merely my idea, but Lord Salisbury himself has said this as far back as 1867, when Mysore was restored.

*To H. H. Ranjitsinhji (on his accession to the Rulership of Jamnagar)**September 7, 1906*

You are, I think, aware that it has always been my earnest desire to see Indian Princes ruling with predominant success for the welfare of their subjects. This is of great importance to the uprising of all India. The instances of successful administration of Indian Princes strengthen the promotion of reforms in India by showing . . . [illegible]

*To Joseph Booth**July 5, 1905*

You put in a condition for the right of a people to control their own affairs as when fairly able to do so. This opens a door for an excuse for the strong to interfere with the weak. Why should any people have any right to subject another people? Every people have their right to enjoy their own and to control their own affairs in the way they best can. The duty of the more civilized is not to subject and plunder the less civilized, but to guide, help, and uplift them without depriving them of their independence.

*To George Freeman**December 18, 1897.*

There is, indeed, a remarkable coincidence between the treatment of India and Canada. The same stupid mistakes and course. But in the case of India, persistence in this course of greed and injustice—the result will be an inconceivable disaster . . . There is no remedy for all our evils till the fundamental evil of greed

is remedied—either by a peaceful change of system or forced by a revolution—and a successful revolution in India means the annihilation of British India. Nature will have its revenge, or, as Salisbury says, “*Injustice will bring the mightiest to ruin*.” The pity is that till any retribution comes India must continue in ever-increasing suffering.

*To J. L. Ellam*

July 9, 1898

I may say this only here that when you doubt “whether India would be better off under the government of any other European Power,” you do not mean that as a justification of England’s evils in India. Then, also, I do not know in what way or sense you use the words “better off.” *In its economic condition I do not see how India can be worse off.* There are some features in connection with Russia, which she will make good use of in trying to make the people of India think that some of the bad features of English rule will not exist in Russian rule. Whether Russia or other Power must of necessity occupy India, when England is made to leave, and whether Russia by becoming worse than England will be able to maintain its power in India, are all questions which time alone will solve.

*To C. J. O'Donnell*

December 6, 1901.

The fight India has to carry on is not against one party but against both parties. The Liberal Government is as bad as the Conservative. It was the Liberal Government with which I had to fight, and had it not been for the unwillingness of several Irish members and the Radicals to defeat the Government, I would have defeated the Government with more votes than 8 with which I defeated them on one of my motions.

*To Sir George Birdwood*

December 30, 1904.

You think that, had we been closer in earlier days, you might have made me a Conservative. Perhaps it might have been the other way, and I might have made you a Radical!

*To The Right Reverend Henry Codman Potter,  
Bishop of New York*

*May 14, 1900.*

In a telegram from New York you are reported to have said, at a meeting held at the Chamber of Commerce, that "the famine was in one sense due to good government. Great Britain had stopped tribal warfare and slaughter and, in consequence, population increased." This, Sir, is the usual Anglo-Indian romance. The reality is quite different—namely, that the fundamental cause of "the extreme poverty" of Indians, with its natural consequences of famines, plagues, and every kind of misery, is the destructive system of government of a bleeding foreign domination.

*Bishop of New York to Dadabhai*

*May 28, 1900.*

I am bound to add that I do not find myself in agreement with the positions you maintain with reference to the English occupancy of India. There was no order, nor safety for life or property, nor freedom of person in India until England went there. As a native Indian of high rank recently said to me in Madras, "We have all that you Americans fought for—life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; and if British power were to take itself away from India to-morrow, we should have bloodshed, chaos and internecine warfares in endless varieties." I confess, for myself, that the people who are saved from these things should, in my judgment, pay the bill for them.

*Dadabhai to Bishop of New York*

*June 10, 1900.*

Both you and the Madras gentleman do not seem to have studied and considered the other side. I must say a few words of facts with reference to your statement that "we should pay the bill." We should pay for having been forced to pay every farthing (excepting a very few part payments for very shame) for all the wars and other circumstances from the very beginning of the English connection, for building up and maintaining the British Indian Empire entirely at our own cost and mainly with our blood . . . with the reward of being reduced to helotry and beggary! We should pay for bleeding us and carrying away

clean out of the country hundreds of millions and continue to drain incessantly and unceasingly, or we should pay for what the Viceroy and Famine Commissioners sanction. . . . We should pay for impoverishing us to an extent to which probably no nation has impoverished another! We should pay for all the consequences of such "other improvements" as famines, plagues . . . and a chronic state of starvation . . . ! We should pay for the security of our property which, in the most ingenious, scientific and unseen way, is taken away from us by the protectors! We should pay for the security of our lives, which are not left worth living, by providing us with starvation, famines, pestilence, etc.! We should pay for the full liberty we enjoy to starve and perish. . . ! We should pay for official Europeans bleeding us, and non-official Europeans exploiting our land and labour and natural resources. . . ! In short, we should pay for a destructive and dishonourable system of government violating Acts of Parliament and the most solemn pledges that ever a people gave to another.<sup>1</sup>

*To Major J. B. Keith*

*December 5, 1901.*

You want to know "the approximate cost of Western civilization to India, say for about fifty years." Before I deal with this, we have to remember that till the year 1849, when Punjab was annexed, all the wars for the formation of the Indian Empire were paid for by the Indians, not to say anything about their bloodshed for the same. The maintenance of the Empire was also at the cost of Indians; and besides to these was to be added all the wealth that had been remitted by the East India Company publicly, and by all Europeans privately, to this country; and also what was consumed by all Europeans in India itself. All this, with interest, will mean thousands of millions and form no small part of the cost of Western civilization.

Now, coming to the cost, say, from 1850, this cost is best ascertained by the net exports, that is to say, the produce and wealth that goes clean out of the country without any material or commercial returns, and of these net exports we have official records. The cost can be divided into two parts:

<sup>1</sup> Dadabhai asked for permission to publish the correspondence, but the Bishop did not consent.

- (1) All that is consumed by Europeans in India to the deprivation of the Indians. Of this part, I do not know of any record as a very reliable estimate. This is sometimes estimated at £10,000,000 annually, or 10 crores of rupees annually.
- (2) All that produce or wealth of India that goes clean out of the country in various shapes as "net exports." I first give you the exports officially recorded for the fifty years, omitting a period of six years, the unsettled period of the Indian Mutiny, comes to about Rs. 664 crores. To this has to be added the profits of the total exports of merchandise, which is only 10 % and actually amounts to 310 crores of rupees. To this has to be added freight and insurance monies, all shipping being British Generally 6 %.

To all the above items is to be added the debt held in the United Kingdom which, in 1900, is about 186 crores of rupees, besides the rupee paper held in England. In India, the debt is 132 crores, of which a portion is held by Europeans.

Lastly, there is the item of interest lost to India on this accumulated drain. If the ordinary Indian commercial compound interest of 9 %, or even 5 %, be added, the total cost of Western civilization will be very enormous indeed. The cost of "Western civilization" is summed up in the destruction of millions by famine, pestilence, etc., and the subsistence of crores of millions on insufficient food.

*To Sir K. Seshadri Iyer, Dewan of Mysore*

*December 20, 1900.*

For some time past, I have been reading the *Mysore Standard* with some distress of mind. . . . I did not, however, think of troubling you. But what has now determined me to write this letter to you is an article in the *Hindu*, in which I read with much regret that the Mysore State was departing from the very essence of the only true policy of a Native State, namely, that a Native State must be administered from top to bottom by Natives themselves. Even the British Government itself had recognized this principle and, while the late Maharaja was a minor, the Government of India took special steps to reduce gradually the foreign element, so that when the Maharaja came to the Gadi,

he should have as nearly as possible a Native Administration. . . . The employment of Europeans in Mysore would be a triple curse: (1) Mysore will be subject to an economic "bleeding" very much like British India. (2) It will prove that Indians are incapable of governing and could not do without Europeans, the severest blow that can be inflicted on the Indians. (3) The Anglo-Indians, who have so persistently opposed the Restoration for more than 30 years, will be only too glad to find the excuse that direct British administration would be the best for Mysore and Native States generally.

With regard to the Gold Mines, or the mineral resources of Mysore, I hope the Mysore State itself, or the Mysore people, would work them and keep for themselves the wealth that Nature has given to them, instead of allowing a foreign people to take it away, leaving only a small royalty to the State and only labourer's wages to the people . . . I go even so far that Mysore should strain every nerve to prepare her own subjects to carry on the administration.

*To J. N. Tata*

*September 16, 1902.*

Pray do not be annoyed for troubling you again. Is it not possible for you to raise the million you want from the Indian Princes? To me it is a matter of grief that you should become the instrument of enabling foreigners to carry away the natural wealth of India with the only benefit of some thousands of Indians earning a livelihood. To my mind, it is a great injury to India. I would rather that this wealth remained buried than that it should be carried away by other people. . . . I hope you will take it in the spirit in which I am writing it.

Tata explained that he would be only too willing to follow Dadabhai's advice if Dadabhai and other Indian friends could help him in raising the required capital in British India and the Indian States at about the same rate of interest which he would have to pay in England. Dadabhai worked whole-heartedly in that direction.

I am so glad (wrote Tata on February 20, 1903) that once more I have your support in my Iron and Steel project and I

thank you cordially for your kind letter I am disposed to take the sanguine view of the *Kaiser-i-Hind* that it may not be impossible to find the whole capital in India—particularly as a Parsi gentleman has, unsolicited, asked me to put him down for a lakh.<sup>1</sup> But I will not conceal from you my belief that in order to accomplish what both you and I hold desirable—namely, starting Iron Works with as far as possible Indian capital wholly—I shall need all the powerful support that men in your position and with recognized service to our country can extend. Things are still in an experimental stage, my experts are working, and I am determined not to invite subscriptions of capital, until by a trial-plant, costing something like 4 or 5 lakhs, I have felt sure of success

It was not given to the greatest Indian industrialist of the day to see the results of his splendid scheme to raise India to the status of one of the greatest industrial countries of the world. He died before the scheme had passed through the experimental stage. When, however, it materialized, and when capital was invited from the public (August 1907), the Tata offices in Bombay were besieged from early morning till late at night by crowds of investors. At the end of three weeks every rupee of the entire capital required at the time was contributed by Indian investors.

*To F. M. Dadma*

*October 25, 1901*

This currency legislation is, in my opinion, a pure fraud and has imposed a heavy taxation upon the people. The treasury here had understood it so, and have expressed their views clearly in their correspondence with the Secretary of State

*To Wacha*

*October 19, 1905.*

I hope the Bengalees will keep up the Boycott Movement—and will now be awakened to the necessity of taking their Industries in their own hands and by their own capital. This Swadeshi movement must have proved very advantageous to the Bombay mills. The home consumption of India alone ought to supply an

<sup>1</sup> Rs 100,000



immense market for all that the mills can produce and will require many more mills. I wonder whether Lancashire being boycotted will retaliate by not providing India with machinery for new mills and repairs for old ones. Can India undertake to start factories to prepare the machinery?

*To Bal Gangadhar Tilak*

*April 16, 1897.*

I have read with much grief that some unfortunate collision has taken place between the Government and the Sarvajanik Sabha. It is a misfortune, we in our political condition cannot afford that an institution, built up by the efforts of the Poona people for more than a generation, should be swept away in a breath. I hope you will do all you can to save the *Sabha* from the blow that has come down upon it. It is not an impossibility—a continuance of that spirit of self-sacrifice with which you and your colleagues began their career of usefulness will enable you to overcome any difficulty.

*To Surendranath Banerjea*

*August 23, 1900*

I wish to write to you, and I am writing the same to Mr. Moulal Ghose, that I am grieved to note the differences that are going on between the *Patrika* and the *Bengalee*. We cannot afford such quarrelling among ourselves.

*To A. J. Balfour (Prime Minister)*

*March 7, 1905*

I thank you for your very courteous letter of the 28th ultimo regarding the correspondence between the Viceroy of India and Sir Henry Cotton, as President of the Indian National Congress. In it you say that Lord Curzon declined to receive the President of the Congress "for the purpose of discussing the resolutions." But with much respect I would point out that this is a misapprehension; as Lord Curzon was not asked to engage in any discussion. I enclose a printed copy of the Viceroy's reply, from which it will be seen that Lord Curzon understood that the object of Sir Henry Cotton's proposed visit was simply "to present to

his Excellency personally a copy of the resolutions passed at the recent session of the Congress at Bombay." Lord Curzon refused to receive the visit for the purpose thus stated; and it is with reference to this refusal that the London Indian Society submitted their protest. . . . It has been the ancient and invariable custom of Indian rulers personally to receive all properly worded petitions for the redress of grievances, however humble the petitioners may be. . . .

*To the Editor, "Pearson's Magazine"*

*Christmas Day, 1902.*

In my wretched country there is no peace and goodwill towards men, but an everlasting struggle. Millions perish by famine and pestilence and scores of millions "live on scanty subsistence" in good season or bad. Not a ray of hope anywhere. A new century and a new sovereign, but India as wretched as ever. No sign of faithful fulfilment of the most solemn pledges. The United States have already begun the elevation, the emancipation and self-government of their new conquered. Britain continues to hold India in bondage for nearly a hundred and fifty years!

*To The Editor of the "Daily News"*

*April 3, 1905.*

In the *Daily News* of 31st ultimo a correspondent, "A Reader," asks for information about the yearly drain of £30,000,000 from India. Will you kindly allow me to give it? I have given this explanation two or three times before, but I now bring the figures up to date.

Any drain from, or addition to, the wealth of a country in connexion with other countries takes place through the channel of commerce. I give an approximate calculation. In order to have a fair average, I take figures for ten years; but I leave out the years 1899-1900 and 1900-1901, as these two years were those of famine in India. I take United Kingdom for the same ten years, viz. 1892 to 1899 and 1902 and 1903. (The latest figures available are till 1903. Parl. Ret. Cd. 2192-1904.) The total imports of the United Kingdom for these ten years (merchandise and treasure) are £4,988,919,359. The total exports for the same period (mer-

chandise and treasure) are £3,421,478,153. This shows an excess of imports over exports, or, in other words, the profits on the exports as £1,567,441,206; that is to say, the United Kingdom received back the whole amount of its exports (£3,421,478,153), and also over and above that £1,567,441,206 more as an addition to its wealth by all its international transactions with foreign countries during the ten years. Thus the United Kingdom made a profit of 45·8 per cent over its exports.

I would make, however, the following allowance: The total profit of £1,567,441,206 includes, taking roughly £300,000,000 in ten years of the political drain of India. Deducting this £300,000,000 from the above profit leaves the net profit of its transactions with other countries as £1,267,441,206 independently of the drain from India. This deduction reduces the percentage of the profit of the United Kingdom from 45·8 to 37 per cent on its own exports.

I now take India. (Parl Ret Cd 2299—1904) The total exports (including Native States) of merchandise and treasure during the ten years are Rs 1,180,665,000. To this must be added freight and insurance on exports to the United Kingdom, because they are paid in the United Kingdom, and not included in the invoices and official returns. This was the case when I was in business in the City. I do not know how the case is for exports to other countries, so I do not add this item. I take roughly for freight and insurance on exports to the United Kingdom from India for the ten years at 5 per cent. The amount of exports is Rs 364,948,240, and 5 per cent on it will be Rs 18,247,412. This addition will make the total of exports from India to be Rs. 1,180,665,000, plus Rs. 18,247,412 = Rs. 1,198,912,412.

The next item to be considered is the profit on the total exports. Though the profits of the United Kingdom, as stated above, are 37 per cent, I take for India a profit of only 20 per cent. The total, therefore, of exports and profit will be for the ten years Rs. 1,198,912,412, plus profit Rs 239,782,482 = Rs. 1,438,694,894. This, then, is the amount equal to which India ought to have imported under normal circumstances like those of the United Kingdom. But India has imported only an amount of Rs. 923,205,000, leaving a drain or deprivation of Rs. 515,489,894 during the ten years.

Taking the present exchange of Rs. 15 to £1, this drain in ten years amounts to £343,659,920, or, say, average of £34,000,000 every year.

If the exports and imports of the Native States are excluded, the drain from British India will be larger than £34,000,000 a year. Besides this, there is the burden of foreign debt inflicted on India without India's voice. . .

Here, then, is a strange and sad contrast. The United Kingdom and India are governed by the same Government, with the result of bringing to the United Kingdom an addition to its wealth, as profits of its exports, in ten years, of £1,267,441,206, and, on the other hand, causing to India in the same ten years a deprivation and loss of £343,659,920.

Not only this. The loss to India must be measured by how much more India would have benefited, had this enormous drain of the ten years and all drain of previous years been at India's own disposal and fructified in the Indians' pockets. It must be further remembered that what Europeans consume in India itself, to the deprivation of the Indians, is not included in this drain.

### *"More European Leeches"*

April 17, 1905.

In a "Memorandum on a few Statements in the Report of the Indian Famine Commission of 1880," which I submitted on January 4, 1881, to Lord Hartington, then Secretary of State for India, I said —

India does not get a moment to breathe or revive. "More Europeans, more Europeans" is the eternal cry, and thus very report itself of the Commission is not free from it . . . When any question of reform arises, the only remedy that suggests itself to British officials' minds is, "Apply more European leeches, apply more European leeches."

Now the Police Commission Report is out, and other Commissions, resolutions, and Reports for "Reforms" (?) (Heaven save us from those "Reforms") have been coming out, with the same eternal cry, "More European leeches, more European leeches," and add to that hideous drain of £30,000,000 or more,

as if India had no people of her own, and, if she had, as if they existed only to be "bled" and "plundered," with all the ghastly consequences of famine and plague—deaths of millions and starvation of scores of millions! When will this curse end?

### *To Maintain British Supremacy*

#### I

May 20, 1905.

The question of military expenditure in India is much under discussion at present. And it is being all thrown on wretched India. Let us see what it is for that all the expenditure is incurred.

I would give only one extract out of several from the statements of the Government of India itself (despatch March 25, 1890):—

"Millions of money have been spent on increasing the army in India, on armaments, and on fortifications to provide for the security of India, not against domestic enemies or to prevent the invasions of the warlike peoples of adjoining countries, but to maintain the supremacy of British power in the East."

Now, may I ask whether it is just and worthy of the British name, conscience, and wealth, to burden India with this expenditure? India, impoverished, bleeding, and perishing by England's own draining of its wealth of over thirty millions every year, and thereby afflicted with famine and plague! Is it not cruel in the extreme?

#### II

June 1, 1905.

Regarding military expenditure in India being of Imperial necessity, I now give the view of the India Office.

Sir James Peile was a member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India, and represented the India Office on the Royal Commission (Welby's) on Indian Expenditure.

Sir J. Peile, after pointing out that the military policy which regulated Indian military expenditure was not exclusively Indian, urged that, "It is worthy of consideration how far it is equitable

to charge on a Dependency the whole military cost of that policy, when that Dependency happens to be the only part of the Empire which has a land frontier adjacent to the territories of a great European Power."

Thus, it is the view of the India Office also (though it falls much short of the reality) that the expenditure is for Imperial purposes, and "not exclusively Indian." And yet the rulers go on heartlessly and meanly, imposing the whole expenditure upon the famine and plague-stricken and starving Indian people . . . Is this the blessing to India of British rule?

### III

June 20, 1905

I now give the declaration of a Secretary of State for India himself as to the entire British interests in India for which European civil and military expenditure is incurred Lord Kimberley (*The Times*, June 13, 1893) at the Mansion House, said —

"There is one point upon which, I imagine, whatever may be our party politics in this country, we are all united; that we are resolutely determined to maintain our supremacy over our Indian Empire. That, I conceive, is a matter about which we have only one opinion."

Then, as to the means, among others, he mentioned, "Our European Civil Service" and "the magnificent European force," and then he concluded "Let us be thoroughly armed as to our frontier defences to support our supremacy in that great Empire."

Now, can anything be more unjust, more tyrannical, more barbarous and unrighteous than to make the wretched Indians pay the whole expenditure of these European services, which are entirely for British interests?

### *The "Bargain" With India*

June 27, 1905.

Mr. Brodrick, in his Budget speech, said "I am prepared to maintain the importance of India's carrying out to the full her

share of the bargain which has been laid down on condition that Great Britain is ready to adhere to her share of it."

The Indians are also often told that they are partners in the Empire and that they must take their share of the responsibility. What, then, should this "bargain" or partnership mean?

I take the figures which Mr. Brodrick gives. He says India spends  $20\frac{1}{2}$  millions for the Army, and Great Britain spends £29,800,000 on the Army and £33,400,000 for the Navy, and, with some extras, equal altogether to 71 millions, making a total, say, of 92 millions. Say the Indians should be ready to contribute half, or 46 millions. Then the essential condition of such true partnership or bargain is that the Indians should share in all the benefits, employments, profits, etc., of all the Army and Navy expenditure to the extent of their share.

Now, I ask Mr. Brodrick whether this is the only true and just "bargain" or partnership, and should be honourably carried out? Or does Mr. Brodrick mean that the Indians should contribute 46 millions, but the English should grasp and plunder the whole benefits, employments, profits, etc., of the expenditure of these 46 millions also? In other words, whether he means the "bargain" of two true partners, or does his "bargain" mean the tyranny of the tyrant slaveholder over the slave? May I request Mr. Brodrick to give a straight, honest answer to this question? And what is the "bargain" with the Colonies, which form a part of the Empire?

### *Nothing but Greed*

August 14, 1905.

Now that the Curzon-Kitchener fight is over, may I ask: What about the people of India? Where do they come in? They had not the slightest voice whatever in the matter; the main object of the European military expenditure in India is to secure from Russian attack British power, British prestige and British exaction of forty to fifty millions a year for British interests. As Mr. Frederick Shore has said: "The fundamental principle of the English had been to make the whole Indian nation subservient, in every possible way, to the interests and benefits of themselves." . . . Is British rule to be nothing but greed, injustice and unrighteousness? I still hope not.

*The Partition of Bengal**August 21, 1905.*

It is said, "those whom God has a mind to destroy, He first deprives of their senses." I wonder whether the Indian authorities have taken leave of their senses. Do they really think that a deep national feeling, sentiment and interest of a whole and vast people can be flouted and treated with disregard by the British rule, whose whole strength, as has been repeatedly urged by Englishmen and Anglo-Indians themselves, must depend solely and ultimately upon the satisfaction and contentment of the people? No mean English and Indian military authority—Lord Roberts—has said: "But however efficient and well equipped the army of India may be, were it indeed absolute perfection, and were its numbers considerably more than they are at present, our greatest strength must ever rest on the firm base of a united and contented India." This high-handed and narrow-minded project of rousing the estrangement and hatred of the vast Bengal population, by the partition of Bengal, cannot but be productive of mischief to the British rule.

*To the "Manchester Guardian"**March 1, 1906.*

Now the debate in the House of Commons last week has as fully as possible asserted that the army in India was for defending and maintaining British power, British prestige in the East, and British possession of India. . . . And yet it is extraordinary that not one of the speakers, in his conscience and sense of justice (which, I hope, have not vanished from the English heart), asked himself and the House the simple question why wretched India should be despotically and mercilessly compelled to pay for an army which is required entirely for Britain's own Imperial purposes, or at least why Britain should not pay a large portion of it. May I ask honourable M.P.s this question?

The most memorable correspondence of the period, however, was that initiated by Dadabhai with Lord George Hamilton in the year 1900. The miserable condition of India, her economic difficulties, and the frustration of hopes engendered by inter-



course with the West and fostered by the promises of Government, impelled him to appeal for justice to Lord George, who was then Secretary of State for India. Together with his letter of October 12, 1900, he sent a cutting from the *Kaiser-I-Hind*, of September 16, in illustration of the strong feeling in India against the violation of promises of equality as regards admission to the service of the State.

New generations have received the blessings of education (he said) and they now realize the present un-British violation of all pledges, however masked it is by misleading, plausible statements. . . . You will see that there is a panic that the authorities were tending towards stopping even in England the competition of Indians for the Civil Service and that the subtle encroachments on the various other services are but a prelude to that disaster.

He was writing that letter not in anger but in agony, and he appealed to Lord George Hamilton to reconsider "the unfortunate retrograde steps which had been lately taken, as well as the injustice and injuries of the past." In the letter that followed (November 28), he recalled the royal proclamations ignored by the executive and added that "notwithstanding the sword of the new foolish and suicidal sedition law that was hanging over their heads, Indian newspapers were freely giving vent to their feelings of bitterness and despair." Then he humbly gave a warning: "The rising and coming generations would not stand, as patiently as the passing generations, the accumulating injustices with their dire consequences of famines, plague, etc., etc., and material and moral degradation and deterioration."

Lord George's reply to the first letter (November 27) had been in Dadabhai's hands before the second letter reached him. The gist of it was that so long as India was governed by the British Crown it was indispensable that a minimum proportion of the Indian Civil Services should be European. That principle, he maintained, was in no way opposed to the admission of Indians, as they became qualified, and as the conditions of the country permitted, to a very large number of offices in the administration.

Such an interpretation of the royal proclamations entailed a fuller recital by Dadabhai of all the "solemn pledges" given up to Queen Victoria's Jubilee year (1887). When those pledges were given, urged Dadabhai, all considerations, even that of losing India, had been thoroughly gone into by Conservative Secretaries of State and Conservative Governments. It was of the first and highest importance that that issue should be fairly faced.

Lord George, in turn, was brutally frank in his reply (December 6):

You advance various contentions, all of which seem to me to be based upon a curious misinterpretation of language or disregard of acknowledged and existing conditions. You announce yourself as a sincere supporter of British rule; you vehemently denounce the conditions and consequences which are inseparable from the maintenance of that rule.

As regards the declaration of policy, his Lordship said they were announcements of the policy that in the government of British India the officials who should take part in its administration should not be exclusively European but an admixture of the inhabitants of Great Britain and the Natives of India.

You allude in passing (he added) to "the foolish and suicidal Sedition Law." Again you seem to be under a hallucination. The law of sedition in India is the same as the law of sedition in this country, and milder in its definition and application than those of any of the great Governments of Europe. You seem to think that a free press means that pressmen are free from the restraint of the ordinary law of the land and at liberty, through their newspapers, to advocate assassination, outrage and racial disturbance and riot. For these offenders alone have prosecutions been instituted. You speak of the increasing impoverishment of India and of the annual drain upon her as steadily and continuously exhausting her resources. Again, I assert, you are under a delusion. Except that during the last five years the rainfalls have thrice failed, and created droughts of immense dimensions, there is not a fact to be found in support of these allegations. I do not for a moment doubt your wish to serve India, but to

effectively perform any work of that kind, facts must be faced and hallucinations dismissed.

This reply, so far as he was concerned, was to be the end of the correspondence. But Dadabhai would not let him have the last word. He said, in another letter, he would pass over subordinate matters and confine himself to the main point of difference between the two.

You say to me: "You announce yourself as a sincere supporter of British rule; you vehemently denounce the conditions and consequences which are inseparable for the maintenance of that rule."

This shows you have not sufficiently known my views. I repeat that I am a sincere supporter of British rule, i.e. of true British rule founded upon honourable, "faithful and conscientious fulfilment" of "solemn pledges." I denounce the present system, which is not British rule but an un-British, despotic and destructive system which, in its declaration of policy, is based upon solemn pledges but which, in its actual practice, is conducted upon the violation of those pledges. The conditions which you lay down as necessary for the maintenance of British rule in India are exactly the conditions which, in their consequences, will destroy, instead of maintaining, British rule in India.

There was no reply to this communication. But Dadabhai saw in the death of Queen Victoria an occasion to revert, in a further letter to Lord George (February 26, 1901), to the great and good Queen's wishes and prayers for India.

Though the beloved Empress has passed away she has left her will—her greatest, her most noble and her most gracious legacy to the Indian people—worthy of herself and of the great British nation over whom she reigned. . . . Her son and our new Emperor thrice declared—before his very first Council, before the world, by his Proclamation issued by yourself, and before Parliament in his very first gracious speech—that he will walk in his good mother's steps. Who now is to be the executor of that gracious and glorious will? She prayed: "And may the God of all power grant to us and to those in authority under us, strength to

carry out these our wishes for the good of our people." And who are those who are "in authority under us"? You are the head of those who are under such authority . . . Will you rise to the height of this great and glorious responsibility and opportunity?

After referring to the two courses open to Lord George, either to fulfil the great and solemn pledges or to persist in their violation and their probable consequences, Dadabhai appealed to his sense of duty, justice, honour and righteousness and concluded with the assurance that his whole desire was that Britain and India might remain together on *British* lines

This communication was formally acknowledged, but as regards the question of the obligations of the British Government to India, it was stated that the Secretary of State had nothing to add to what was contained in his Lordship's letter of December 6.

There was, however, yet something to follow for the delectation of Lord George Hamilton. Under the caption, "Facts and Hallucinations," the following paragraph appeared in *India* of June 7, 1901.

The Hallucination That the famine in India is the Famine of Food

The Fact That the famine is a Famine of Money.

"The supply of food," said Lord George Hamilton in the House of Commons, July 26, 1900, "is almost the least of the difficulties with which the Indian Government have to contend. There is always a sufficiency of food in the great continent of India even in years of drought."

In the same journal, and under the same heading, there was another paragraph, on June 21, maintaining that the belief that the charge of the India Office was borne by the taxpayers of the United Kingdom was a hallucination, whereas the fact was that it was borne entirely by India.

Hopes blighted by the bureaucracy were, however, once more revived by the message given by King Edward VII, which

formed the theme of another letter sent by Dadabhai to the *Tribune* and the *Morning Leader* (February 22, 1906):

Reading yesterday's proceedings in Parliament (said he) I may venture to say that there is and there has been for a long, long time, a subject of far more serious importance, namely, that under British rule in India millions and millions of human beings are perishing by famine and plague. Would British instincts and sense of duty, conscience and humanity ever lead to deal with the true remedy . . . ? By a divine and blessed inspiration the King himself unconsciously speaks the true and only remedy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the hope expressed by King Edward VII that in the South African Colonies as elsewhere throughout his dominions the grant of free institutions would be followed by an increase of prosperity

## CHAPTER XXXI

# INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

**D**URING the middle of the nineteenth century South Africa was the El Dorado of European settlers. They had all that they wanted, but the local labour was unsatisfactory. The British planters of Natal, therefore, approached the Government of India for facilities in obtaining Indian labour. The first batch of indentured labourers from Calcutta and Madras reached Natal on November 16, 1860. On that day was sown the seed of disunion and discord between the European and Indian population throughout South Africa—discord that culminated in the famous *Satyagraha* campaign started during the year 1907 under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, then a young barrister unknown to fame outside a small circle of people.

With the indentured labourers went petty Indian traders and their free servants to Natal, the Transvaal, the Orange Free State, and Cape Colony. Simple in their mode of life and thrifty as they were, they generally flourished. Most of the indentured labourers set up, after having served their terms, as agriculturists, small craftsmen, or traders. This was not, however, what the white colonists had looked for. They had merely called for labourers who should drudge for them perpetually, or leave the country after a stipulated period. The idea that they should enter into competition, even to a small extent, with the white inhabitants of the Colonies, as agriculturists and traders, had never entered their heads. If India continued to pour into the Colony even a few thousands every year out of her vast population, where would they stand within a few years? "Away with the Asiatics!" became their watchword.

Some of them suggested the compulsory repatriation of the indentured labourers at the end of the indenture; others advocated

the imposition of a heavy annual capitation tax at the end of the first term of five years, so as to force them back under indenture. The Government of India, however, would not listen to such iniquitous proposals, and Natal, being a Crown Colony, could not easily secure the consent of the British Government to any measure infringing the rights of Indians as British citizens. A movement was, therefore, set on foot to attain responsible government, which was eventually conferred on Natal in 1893.

In the Transvaal there was a similar movement to shut out Indians. It being an independent Republic, some of the leading Indians approached President Kruger. He would not so much as admit them to his house, but made them stand in the court-yard! British citizenship had no value in this Republic. There was then in existence a treaty between the Boers and the British, known as the London Convention, which provided for equal treatment in the eye of the law for all persons residing in the Republic save and except natives of the place. Despite this treaty, in the year 1885, a very drastic law was rushed through the Volksraad, which required every Indian settling in the Republic for purposes of trade to register, on payment of £25. It also debarred Indians from holding land. The registration fee was subsequently reduced to £3; the clause disqualifying Indians from holding landed property was also removed, but it was provided that Indians could acquire fixed property only in such locations, wards and streets as were set apart specially for their residence by the Transvaal Government. The locations selected for these "untouchables" were situated away from the towns, with no water supply, no sanitary conveniences, no lighting arrangements. Trade jealousy was the main cause of such treatment, but it was sought to be justified on "urgent sanitary grounds."

The treatment given to Indians in the Orange Free State was worse. A stringent law provided that no Indian could, on any account, hold fixed property, or carry on mercantile or farming business, or enjoy franchise rights in the State. In exceptional cases, however, the authorities were graciously pleased to allow an Indian to reside there as a labourer or as a hotel waiter.

In Cape Colony, too, certain disabilities were attached to Indians. For instance, their children could not attend public schools. There were no restrictions as to trade and ownership of land for a long time, but in 1892 all coloured people, including British Indians, were deprived by legislation of their civic rights and privileges.

Mahatma Gandhi had not yet set foot on the soil of Africa. There was then no political or spiritual agitator to rouse the entire Indian community, as he did soon afterwards, against the deprivation of civil liberties and the imposition of disabilities repugnant to the spirit of British law. Nevertheless, some of the Indians resident in the Colonies had sufficient self-respect to resist such encroachments on their rights of citizenship. In Cape Colony was established an organization called the Coloured Agitation Committee, the Chairman of which was H. O. Ally, of Ali Brothers & Co., Soda Water Manufacturers, Kimberley. It sent a cable to Gladstone, then Prime Minister of England, requesting him to advise Queen Victoria to withhold her assent to the obnoxious measure, pending receipt of petitions by the Premier. Simultaneously, Ally wrote to Dadabhai (September 12, 1892) stating that mass meetings had been held in Cape Town, Kimberley, Queen's Town, and King William Town, protesting against the Act, and that Lord Ripon had been approached for aid in delaying the Royal assent until their petition could reach headquarters and be judged on its merits.

Dadabhai lost no time in taking up the matter with Lord Ripon, who was then Colonial Secretary. In his letter of October 24, Ally wrote to Dadabhai that a monster petition containing 10,341 signatures had been handed that day to Lieutenant-General G. W. Cameron, Governor of the Colony, for transmission to England. About the same time Dadabhai received from Hajeer Mahomed Hajeer Dada & Co. a long list of grievances of Indians residing in Natal. Ever since the beginning of 1891 this firm had been in communication with the Indian Political Agency, of which Dadabhai and Digby were the moving spirits. They approached Bradlaugh. He put questions in the Commons with



a view to securing for British Indian subjects freedom of travel and trade. He had intended to press the matter very vigorously in the 1891 session of Parliament, but his death robbed Indians, both in India and in South Africa, of his valued advocacy. C. A. V. Conybeare was the next M.P. approached, and he visited South Africa to study the question on the spot. *India*, meanwhile, carried on much propaganda in England.

Indian merchants in the Transvaal also sent Dadabhai a cablegram (October 13) to the effect that the Volksraad had passed a resolution instructing the Government to carry out Law 3 of 1885 in respect of Indian merchants, prohibiting them from carrying on vocations in towns, and that they prayed for the Queen Empress's intervention in protection of her Indian subjects. Other letters followed concerning the position of Indian subjects in the South African Republic and the Orange Free State. Dadabhai faithfully passed on all communications to Lord Ripon with a request that he would do his best to do justice to the aggrieved parties.

It was a matter which required delicate handling. In one of the communications Lord Ripon asked for more particulars, in another he pointed out that the Transvaal was not British territory. In a further personal letter (January 30, 1893), he said "The South African Republic being, as you know, an independent State, the matter is one which can only be dealt with by negotiation."

At the same time, Lord Ripon was making all possible diplomatic efforts to bring pressure on the South African authorities. In a letter, dated February 22, he asked Dadabhai to point out to Hajee Mahomed Hajee Dada & Co. that the good offices of Her Majesty's High Commissioner for South Africa had been repeatedly exercised on behalf of the British Indian merchants in the South African Republic and the Orange Free State, that the British Government had been in personal communication with the various authorities on the subject, and that it was the desire of Government that the Queen's Indian subjects should be treated upon a footing of equality with all her other subjects.



MR GANDHI IN SOUTH AFRICA  
(about 1900)



To keep Dadabhai informed of what he was doing, Lord Ripon sent him, on April 26, a copy of the letter which he had addressed to the Government of Natal. Such a sympathetic statesman was, indeed, expected to exert all his influence on behalf of the ill-treated Indians, but the authorities in South Africa were not in a mood to listen until there appeared on the scene a sagacious leader who taught his countrymen in that far-off land, powerless as they were, the secret of the efficacy of soul-force in winning a victory for the Truth, without recourse to violence.

It was a purely professional visit which took Mahatma Gandhi from India to South Africa in April 1893. The hardships he encountered during the journey on railway trains, the indignities to which he was subjected, and even the assaults made on him, all because he was an Indian, so disgusted him that his first impulse was to quit the country forthwith. But what about the professional engagement? Could he return without fulfilling it? While he was still undecided, he was pushed out of the train one night by a European police constable at Maritzburg. Late that night he came to the conclusion that it would be a cowardly act to hasten back to India. He, therefore, proceeded to Pretoria, pocketing further insults, and attended to his professional work.

Just as he was preparing to return to India, early in the year 1894, Gandhi found that the Government of Natal was about to introduce a Bill to disfranchise Indians. He advised them to resist strongly such an encroachment on their rights. "Stay and help us," they prayed. The same night he drew up a petition to be presented to the Legislative Council. Then he founded the Natal Indian Congress, and carried on an agitation not only in South Africa but also in England against the iniquities of the authorities. Weekly letters were written to Dadabhai, as member, and to Wedderburn, as Chairman, of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress. Whenever there was need to send copies of representations, a sum of at least £10 was remitted to Dadabhai as a contribution towards postage and other charges.

Acknowledging the willing assistance given by Dadabhai, Mahatma Gandhi observes in his *Satyagraha in South Africa*:

He was not the Chairman of the Committee. But it seemed to us that the proper course was to send money to him, in the first instance, so that he might then forward it himself to the Chairman. But Dadabhai returned the very first instalment and suggested that we should remit the money intended for the British Committee directly to Sir William Wedderburn. The prestige of the Committee (he wrote) would increase if we approached it through Sir William Wedderburn direct.

The very first letter (July 5, 1894), written by Gandhi to Dadabhai, is of peculiar interest as it embodied a strikingly modest personal explanation.

A word for myself and I have done. I am yet inexperienced and young and therefore quite liable to make mistakes. The responsibility undertaken is quite out of proportion to my ability. I may mention that I am doing this without any remuneration. So you will see that I have not taken the matter up, which is beyond my ability, in order to enrich myself at the expense of the Indians. I am the only available person who can handle the question. You will, therefore, oblige me very greatly if you will kindly direct and guide me and make necessary suggestions which shall be received as from a father to his child.

Regarding the Franchise Law Amendment Bill, he observed:

The first Parliament of Natal under Responsible Government has been pre-eminently an Indian Parliament. It has for the most part occupied itself with legislation affecting Indians by no means favourably. The Governor, in opening the Legislative Council and Assembly, remarked that his Ministers would deal with the Franchise which was exercised by Indians in Natal, although they never exercised it in India. The reasons given for the sweeping measure to disfranchise Indians were that they had never exercised the Franchise before, and that they were not fit for it.

The petition of the Indians seemed to prove a sufficient answer to this. Hence they have now turned round and given out the

real object of the Bill, which is simply this: "We do not want the Indians any more here. We want the coolies, but they shall remain slaves here and go back to India as soon as they are free." I earnestly request your undivided attention to the cause and appeal to you to use your influence that always has been and is being used on behalf of the Indians, no matter where situated. The Indians look up to you as children to the father. Such is really the feeling here.

Several traders and their lawyers also wrote to Dadabhai, soliciting his intervention in cases of hardship, and he scrupulously attended to all such complaints. In January 1895 Gandhi heard in Durban that the Bill for disfranchising Indians in Natal was disallowed. The news required corroboration. He wrote to Dadabhai (January 25), "Though the Government is silent, the papers have been informing the public that the Franchise Bill has been disallowed by Her Majesty. Can you give us any information on the point?" Thus was the Indian M.P. kept busy by his countrymen in Africa. But all such work was a labour of love to him.

On August 29, 1895, a deputation organized by the British Committee of the Indian National Congress waited upon Joseph Chamberlain at the Colonial Office. Dadabhai had drawn up, for the occasion, a statement of grievances of the British Indians in Africa and printed and circulated copies of it broadcast. In this note he exposed the hollowness of the excuse that the South African authorities had to pass most of the Anti-Indian measures for reasons of sanitation. He produced three certificates from European medical practitioners resident in Pretoria and Johannesburg. One of them, H. Prior Veale, said that he had a considerable practice during the years 1890 to 1895 amongst the Indians in Pretoria and that he had generally found them cleanly in their persons, and free from the diseases due to dirt and careless habits. Their dwellings were generally clean, and sanitation was willingly attended to by them.

Class considered (he added), I should be of opinion that the lowest class Indian compares most favourably with the lowest class white, i.e. the lowest class Indian lives better and in better

habitation, and with more regard to sanitary measures, than the lowest class white. I have further found, during the period that small-pox was epidemic in the town and district, that although every nation nearly had one or more of its members at some time in the lazaretto, there was not a single Indian attacked.

The other doctors, too, gave their opinion that the Indian settlers were as clean in their habits and domestic life as white people of the same standing. The statement also called attention to the various disfranchising measures and submitted that they touched directly the well-being of the British Indian subjects in South Africa and indirectly the rights and privileges of such subjects emigrating to other parts of Her Majesty's Dominions.

These facts and arguments were urged before the Colonial Secretary by the deputation. He promised to make and, if necessary, to repeat representations urging the Transvaal Government to remove the restrictions on residence. The Transvaal being a foreign and friendly Government, he could do nothing more. As regards the disfranchisement of Indians in Cape Colony, he promised to appeal against it, although he regarded the task as difficult. He promised also to disallow the proposal to disfranchise Indians in Natal. Consideration of other questions, such as acquisition of real property and issue of tradelicences, was held over.

The deputation was described in *The Times* as one composed chiefly of Parsi gentlemen in London. A prompt disclaimer from Dadabhai pointed out that it consisted of only two Parsis, four Hindus, and two Muhammadans.

On October 7 the Volksraad of the South African Republic declared that the term "British subjects" in the treaty between the British Government and the Government of the Republic meant only "white persons." The British Indian Defence Committee protested against such an odious distinction and arbitrary limitation of the meaning of the term. Its memorial was sent to Dadabhai and was passed on by him with a covering letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Thus for two years Dadabhai had been in constant communication with the authorities, but with very little practical result. No

serious measures appeared to have been taken to check the torrent of Anti-Asiatic legislation in the South African States. Eventually came a letter from Downing Street (November 13, 1897) to the effect that the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Chamberlain, was not prepared to advise Her Majesty to exercise the powers of disallowance with respect to the Natal Acts regarding franchise, but that he was in communication with the Government of Natal on the subject of preservation of the rights of those Indians who were already resident in the Colony when the Immigration Act was passed. By this time Gandhi had returned to India and apprised the public of the condition of their fellow countrymen in South Africa. His pamphlet on the subject and his speeches in Bombay, Poona, Madras, and Calcutta created a profound impression, and the whole case was presented to Lord George Hamilton in December 1896 in an incisive memorial drawn up by Pherozeshah Mehta.

It did not, however, stop the legislative machines in South Africa from turning out piece after piece of legislation fastening fresh legal disabilities on the Indians residing in the land. They thereupon deputed a representative, Mansukhlal Nazar, to England to explain the situation to British friends and the authorities. He was in constant touch with Dadabhai and other members of the British Committee of the Congress, and he elicited the sympathy of the British public, including the India Office and the Colonial Office. On his return to South Africa, the Committee of the British Indians resident in Natal placed on record its thanks to Dadabhai "for the splendid support extended to the cause of British Indians in South Africa." As Honorary Secretary to the Committee, Gandhi forwarded to Dadabhai a copy of the resolution with a covering letter from Durban (August 20, 1898), the postscript of which ran as under

May I venture to ask you to be good enough to favour us with your likeness? I may say that we have been for a long time thinking of placing enlargements of the photographs of the leaders of Indian Society and particularly of those who have worked for the Indian cause in this part of the world



Before the Boer War, the position of Indians was bad enough in the Transvaal; it became worse than ever under the British regime. The Boers had their anti-Indian regulations, but they were not enforced, chiefly owing to representations made by the British Government on behalf of British Indians. After the British occupation, however, the regulations previously evaded in practice were enforced with vigour. Any Indian could trade, before the war, in any part of the Transvaal with a licence, but under the British no Indian could live or trade in any place other than bazaars. An exception was nominally made in favour of those who held licences, before the war, to trade in towns, or who could, by reason of education or status, obtain from Government a certificate of exemption. Such certificates were, however, rarely given.

Chamberlain visited the Colonies to investigate the situation on the spot, but there was no relief. Gandhi continued to send to Dadabhai weekly notes on the state of affairs. In one of his letters (November 3, 1903), he said

The position you will see is very delicate. This will be in your hands by the end of this month. There will, therefore, remain only one month between the time of removal to bazaars and the time of the receipt hereof by you. I hope that you will receive from Mr Brodrick and Mr Lyttelton assurance that those who are now holding licences will not be disturbed.

Dadabhai felt that his role in this affair was mainly that of a postman carrying letters from the South African correspondents to the British authorities, but he was more than an ideal letter-carrier; he was an indefatigable advocate, as well, of his South African clients. Not a single opportunity did he lose to urge the British authorities to do everything possible in the matter. They, on the other hand, pleaded justification for their policy of drift on the ground that whatever they might do might be undone by the Colonies soon afterwards, as they were to obtain self-government very shortly. Dadabhai's reply to this

was contained in his letter to Lord George Hamilton (March 24, 1903):

Our main contention is that while the Transvaal and Orange River are still Crown Colonies, the question of the position of British Indian subjects should be settled in accordance with recognized British principles. If this is done, the *onus* will be on the Colonies if afterwards, when they have self-government, they desire to alter an arrangement approved by the Imperial authorities. If things are now allowed to drift, the Colonists will (not without show of reason) say that the British Government has condoned the present exceptional treatment of British Indian subjects.

The following letter to Dadabhai from Gandhi (March 20, 1905) shows what the position was in 1905:

I commend to your attention the current numbers of the *Indian Opinion* wherein you will find that at the Cape they are trying to introduce a General Dealers' Licences Bill, which is calculated to do a great deal of harm to the British Indians settled at the Cape. In Natal, as you will see, a Firearms Bill has been published in the *Gazette*, which needlessly insult British Indians. There is, too, a reproduction of the Transvaal anti-Asiatic legislation in the district of Stryheid, which has been lately annexed to Natal, and the Municipal Corporation Bill contains clauses which are most objectionable. In the Orange River Colony disabilities upon disabilities are being imposed upon Indians through the instrumentality of bye-laws, and I venture to draw your attention to the fact that while a great deal has been done there regarding the Transvaal legislation, as also the Natal Legislation, nothing has been done regarding the Orange River Colony.

Other correspondents also related to Dadabhai from time to time their tale of woe. In April 1903, he received a long letter in Gujarati from Nadirshah Dhunjeebhai Debu from Ladysmith (March 11), with which was sent a bundle of newspapers and clippings from the *Natal Witness* and the *Natal Mercury*, describing the ill-treatment received by the British Indians.

They are treated (he said) like *curs* by Europeans. Even if they are murdered by the Whites, the culprits go scot-free. They are the jurors and they are the judges. . . . The condition of our poor Gujarat labourers is worse than those of other Asiatics. They are most hard-working, frugal and gentle. To escape from famine and plague and the persecution of their creditors they come here and find themselves from the frying pan into the fire.

Such was the reward for the services voluntarily offered and rendered by Indians during the war. It was, however, characteristic of the man that, despite such experience, Gandhi raised a Stretcher Bearer Corps for service with the Natal troops, when the Zulu rebellion broke out in 1906. A few days before, Dadabhai had sent to him a cablegram suggesting that he should go to England for one more powerful effort to stir the authorities in England to action. Gandhi wrote in reply (June 8):

I was making preparations accordingly, when a communication was received from the Natal Government accepting the offer of the Indian community to form an "Indian Stretcher Bearer Corps." I am, therefore, expecting to leave for the front any day. Under the circumstances we have all decided that the formation of the corps is far more important than our visit to England. It is recognized that I should be with the corps, at least in the initial stages. It is evident that the Natal Government intend to test the capability of the Indians for ambulance work. . . . We here, therefore, hope that the Committee that is looking after Indian interests in South Africa will take the necessary steps to place the position before Government.

The corps consisting of twenty-five men was on active service for a month, when telegrams and letters poured in asking Gandhi to proceed at once to the Transvaal, which had now become the storm centre of South Africa. He hastened to Johannesburg and wrote to Dadabhai on July 30 that he had just returned from the front and had received his letter regarding their statement submitted to the Constitution Committee, which was then considering the question of fresh legislation. He enclosed a copy of his letter to Wedderburn in which he had stated that

although he could not then be of any use in connexion with the Report of the Constitution Committee, the British Indian Association still desired that he should proceed to England, accompanied by one or two merchants, not necessarily to influence the letters patent that would be granted but to place the British Indian position personally before the authorities. He was anxious to know whether such a deputation was likely to be of any use.

Another letter (August 6), addressed by him to Dadabhai, indicated what the new menace was. A statement was made by the Colonial Secretary before the Transvaal Legislative Council concerning the proposed legislation for Asiatics with a view to preventing the immigration into the Colony of large numbers of Asiatics who had not settled there before the war.

The statement is most extraordinary and if legislation is introduced based on it, frightful injustice will be done to the Indian community. . . . Robbed of the soft words which clothe it, it means that every Indian in the Colony will have to be now registered for the third time without the slightest excuse. . . . I very much fear that the real situation is not understood by the Imperial Government and that the Local Government have evidently convinced the Imperial Government that by passing legislation in the direction sketched by Mr. Duncan (the Colonial Secretary) they would be really granting concessions.

A week later, Gandhi enclosed with his letter (August 13), a copy of *Indian Opinion* giving detailed information about the contemplated legislation.

It will be seen at a glance (he observed) that Mr. Duncan is very much restricting the scope of the despatches (of Lyttelton and Lord Milner). Neither Mr. Lyttelton nor Lord Milner has ever mentioned anything about registration and both of them have laid down that better-class Indians, at least, should have full rights, so that, for Mr. Duncan to state that he is carrying out the intentions of the Imperial Government is wide of the mark unless the Liberal ministers have veered round entirely and propose still further to curtail the liberty of the British Indians than what the Conservative ministry was prepared to do.

Dadabhai ploddingly passed on all these communications to Lord Elgin, who had succeeded Chamberlain as Colonial Secretary, with fervent appeals for equitable treatment. On September 22 he received a reply stating that the legislation in question, while far from affecting all the improvements in the conditions of the British Indian subjects in the Transvaal which His Majesty's Government would desire, had been approved by the Secretary of State as removing some of the hardships to which Asiatics were subject and went as far as was possible on the eve of the establishment of responsible government. "It does not appear to Lord Elgin," ran the concluding paragraph of the letter, "that any useful purpose was likely to be served by sending a deputation from the Transvaal to this country, but if the delegates are sent, they will be given an opportunity of stating their views."

A cablegram was accordingly sent to Gandhi. Before, however, he received this message storm clouds gathered over the horizon. The Indian community was indignant on perusing the draft Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance published in the *Transvaal Government Gazette Extraordinary* of August 22. It required every Indian, man, woman or child of eight years or upwards, entitled to reside in the Transvaal, to register his or her name with the Registrar of Asiatics and to take out a certificate of registration. The Registrar was to note down important marks of identification upon the applicant's person, and to take his finger and thumb impressions. Failure to apply for registration was made an offence punishable with fine, imprisonment or deportation, within the discretion of the Court.

Outrageous as was the requisition for the registration of even women and children, the requirements regarding complete finger-prints, as though they were criminals, was the most obnoxious. "If any one came forward to demand a certificate from my wife," said one of the prominent members of the Indian community in the Transvaal, at a meeting held to discuss the situation, "I would shoot him on the spot and take the consequences." It was resolved not to submit to the Ordinance if it

became law and to start Passive Resistance, should all constitutional remedies fail. A deputation consisting of Gandhi and H. O. Ally proceeded to England. They met Dadabhai and through him were introduced to the British Committee of the Congress.

A first-class crisis had arisen. Tired of submitting fruitless petitions, Dadabhai welcomed the heroic decision of the Indians in South Africa to offer, if necessary, moral resistance to the Transvaal Government. He advised the two delegates how they could secure the co-operation of British and Indian friends in obtaining redress, if possible, by constitutional means. Bhow-naggee, being then a member of the House of Commons, was particularly helpful, also Sir Lepel Griffin, who, though opposed to the Congress movement in India, was keenly interested in the contest in South Africa. Led by him, the deputation waited on Lord Elgin and Lord Morley, who were certainly not wanting in sympathy. That, however, was all that the deputation could have expected. The two statesmen were not in a position to comfort them with anything more concrete than assurances. Before leaving England, the South African delegates entertained at breakfast Dadabhai and other British friends who had helped them in their work. The two delegates also sent him a special letter, thanking him for his presence at the deputation to Lord Elgin in spite of the inclemency of the weather, and for the great support he had given to their cause.

During Gandhi's absence from Johannesburg, Mr. H. S. L. Polak, who had thrown himself heart and soul into the movement, was in constant communication with Dadabhai, as acting Honorary Secretary to the British Indian Association. In one of the letters (October 29) he wrote:

The papers here seem to be strung to a high pitch now that the deputation has arrived in England. On Tuesday evening last, the Johannesburg *Star* published an article ostensibly dealing with the mission of the deputation but actually containing a most bitter personal attack on Mr. Gandhi. I am advised that the article is of a libellous nature. I am sending a copy of this article to Mr. Gandhi.

The libelled leader was, however, soaring far too high to notice the fulminations of the Johannesburg *Star*.

The Asiatic Registration Act, which was an exact replica of the original Ordinance, had been rushed through all its stages at a single sitting of the Transvaal Parliament on March 21, 1907. It was to take effect from July 1, 1907, and Mahatma Gandhi had little time to think of anything except the historic struggle on which the Indian Community was to embark under his leadership. That struggle forms the most fascinating episode of the story of Indians in South Africa, but this is not the place to relate it. What concerns us here is the letter written by Gandhi to Dadabhai two days after the Act was passed:

I do think that *India* should from week to week prominently discuss this matter. Whatever is done in the Transvaal will be followed throughout the Colonies, and if the principle of degrading racial legislation that underlies the Ordinance is once accepted, there will be an end to Indian immigration.

Dadabhai took the earliest opportunity to stir the whole of India to do everything possible to end the troubles of their unhappy brethren in those Colonies. "I recommend to your serious notice," he said in his presidential address to the Calcutta Congress, "the treatment of British Indians in South Africa." *India*, too, kept for years the South African problem in the forefront.

It is a remarkable evidence of the value which the British Indian community in South Africa attached to Dadabhai's services in the agitation that had been carried on in England on its behalf that even when failing health had compelled him to live the life of a recluse at Versova, the Transvaal Indians approached him in July 1909 for his lead "as the father of the Indian Nation that is to be." They presented to him a petition bearing 1,900 signatures, and through him appealed to the whole of India for support to their petitions for the removal of the colour-bar constituted by the Asiatic Registration Act. Dadabhai had interviews with Mr. Polak who brought with him the letter

of the British Indian Association to the Grand Old Man. A public meeting was held in Bombay on September 14, 1909. Dadabhai could not attend it, but in a message that he sent he said: "I have all along sympathized deeply with the troubles of our countrymen in South Africa and the present meeting has my fullest sympathy in its objects."

Those troubles, indeed, preyed heavily on his mind. In his letters to friends and public messages he referred to them now and again, and in his eighty-ninth birthday message to the people (September 12, 1913), he expressed his "deep concern at the indifferent way" in which the Imperial Government had been treating the question.

At last, the orderly, non-violent and chivalrous manner in which the stupendous struggle was carried on by the soldiers of the *Satyagraha* army extorted the admiration even of the authorities whom they were fighting. They recanted in the middle of the year 1914; the dispute was settled to the satisfaction of the forces of *Satyagraha*. Dadabhai saw in it ample justification for his life-long contention that there is no such thing on this earth as a settled fact and that persistent agitation in a good cause must wear out all obstacles. The victorious general of the *Satyagraha* campaign returned to India, little dreaming that within a short time he was to be the hero of still more stupendous *Satyagraha* struggles in his own motherland!



## CHAPTER XXXII

### NORTH LAMBETH

AFTER he had given his evidence before the Royal Commission, Dadabhai thought it was time he should look round for a constituency. An invitation came from South Hackney in March 1899. The Progressive Association (Liberal, Democratic, and Labour) of the Division resolved unanimously to send a deputation to Dadabhai to convey to him its desire that he should contest South Hackney at the next election. Dadabhai agreed, provided he was convinced that there were good prospects of success. Sufficient evidence of such prospects was, however, not forthcoming. For twelve more months the search for a constituency had to be continued. On March 20, 1900, Arthur Symonds of the National Reform Union wrote to Dadabhai, regretting that he had negotiated with several constituencies but found that Dadabhai's age was considered a serious drawback.

I told them (he added) that you were stronger and more active than many men twenty years your junior, but they said they wanted a man who would be likely to remain their member for many years. Latterly, there has been a strong disposition on the part of Committees to "lie low" and not bring out candidates, because the Liberal party is so divided on the subject of the war with the South African Republics. But if, as now seems likely, there should be a dissolution in the summer, they will be compelled to select their candidates.

When, however, the general election was announced, Dadabhai was in bed with bronchitis. In spite of a bad throat he had given an address on India at Clerkenwell, and the exertion brought on the malady. His friends, however, traced the real cause of the illness to overwork for four consecutive years in connexion with the work of the Royal Commission. His medical adviser warned

him that he would catch pneumonia if he left his bed; even so, he was prepared to stand for election, if some constituency could be found to adopt him.

When he was slightly better, he wrote (September 23) to J. R. Sieger, whose help as his agent at Finsbury had proved invaluable:

I wish to take my share in this contest. But as I cannot conduct a contest myself personally, what is to be done? The only alternative that I can think of is this, if it be practicable and desirable.—Some earnest Liberal friends should undertake the campaign on my behalf, nominating me as the candidate for the constituency you may select. Please consult Sir William Wedderburn, and I shall be willing to do what you two may agree upon. Dulwich is too large and expensive.

It was, however, on the face of it an impracticable proposition and had to be abandoned. In June 1901 Dadabhai went to North Lambeth at the invitation of the Liberal and Radical Association of that constituency. On August 29 the Secretary of the Political Council of the local Liberal and Radical Club informed him that the Council had unanimously adopted him as their candidate for the Parliamentary division of North Lambeth. On the same day the Secretary of the North Lambeth Branch of the National Democratic League reported to him that the League had unanimously adopted him as their candidate. He was also adopted as Parliamentary candidate for the constituency at a conference of delegates from nineteen Industrial, Trade Unionist, and Temperance organizations.

The question was thoroughly discussed (wrote the Secretary to the Lambeth and District Trades and Labour Council) and it being put to the vote it was decided that you be supported by the whole of these different organizations, and as at the lowest margin the delegates represented over four thousand votes in the division, you can depend upon a very large support from the Labour Party.

The prospects seemed rosy, but Dadabhai soon discovered that difficulties similar to those encountered at Central Finsbury were to dog his footsteps in this constituency also. There was a split in

the North Lambeth Liberal and Radical Association with whom rested the final decision. Some favoured W. Wightman, a local candidate with a good record of civic work; others backed Dadabhai. Both were asked to address the Executive, who decided on September 10, by nine votes against six, to recommend Wightman. Dadabhai was, however, again invited to address the Executive. He gave his address on October 1, dealing fully with current questions relating to Home and Foreign policy. At the meeting of the Association, on November 26, the names of both Wightman and Naoroji were submitted. Sixty-six votes were cast in Dadabhai's favour against fifty-nine for Wightman. In his letter communicating the result the Secretary to the Association pointed out that the selection should not be considered final until ratified at a subsequent meeting by at least a two-thirds vote of the members present and confirmed by a public meeting called for that purpose.

Within a fortnight there were fresh developments. Dadabhai was asked to attend a meeting on January 7, 1902, to discuss the situation and was told that allegations had been made that outsiders had found their way to the previous meeting and that he had given money to certain parties. Dadabhai admitted having supplied funds to a friend or friends for election expenses; but he denied any knowledge that members had been enrolled to vote for him and that their subscriptions had been paid for them. The Executive, however, evaded calling a meeting to ratify the selection of Dadabhai. After waiting for eleven months, he wrote to the Association (October 13, 1902):

In consultation with some Liberal, Radical, Labour, Trade Unionist, Temperance and Irish friends, and with a large support already promised to me by all sections of the Progressive Party, I have decided to contest North Lambeth at the next Election in the Liberal and Progressive cause. I have, therefore, to request you kindly to communicate this decision to your Executive.

It was an extraordinary attitude for a member of the Association to take up; Dadabhai was asked to explain his position. He replied promptly (October 15):

As a misunderstanding has occurred about my letter of the 13th instant, I may explain that I have determined to contest North Lambeth as the Liberal and Progressive candidate at the next Election, whether the Association adopts me or not as their own candidate.

John Maddy, the Secretary, tendered his resignation at the same time, and other supporters of Dadabhai started a new organization called "The North Lambeth Labour and Progressive Association." Dadabhai was elected President.

Pandemonium reigned at the annual meeting of the Liberal and Radical Association, held on October 30, where a fierce battle was fought between the champions of the rival candidates. "Mr. Naoroji's letters made it quite clear," said Victor Rogers, President of the Association, "that the Association would be a body of jackasses if it now took the trouble to support his candidature."

Some members took strong exception to Dadabhai's conduct; they made mysterious references to "Naoroji cheques" in circulation; others put up a spirited defence. A prominent trade unionist, H. R. Taylor, said that Dadabhai must have known of what was taking place within the Association, "something which he thought was derogatory to his candidature," before he took the step of throwing the Association over. He submitted that politically the Association had been almost dead and that it had not even called a meeting to protest against the Education Bill. He moved that a deputation should wait on Dadabhai. The motion was, however, lost, there being ten votes for it and twenty against.

Wightman then wrote to the Press that if Dadabhai persisted in declaring himself a candidate, he would be his opponent. Later, however, he informed the President of the Association (February 16, 1903), that if Dadabhai withdrew from North Lambeth, he would also stand aside, so as to give a united party the opportunity of winning the seat. Wightman's letter was at once passed on to Dadabhai with an expression of the President's hope that the proposal would be accepted.

Simultaneously with this communication Dadabhai received a letter from Caine (February 17), stating that he had seen the authorities of Parliament Street but that he was sorry all his efforts had proved futile. No one could move Wightman, or those who supported him, from the position taken up by him.

It is no business of mine to give you advice (he added), but I feel very hopeless about your success in North Lambeth. It is against all previous electioneering experience that any candidate, situated as you are, should win the seat, and I should be very sorry indeed if you had a bad defeat, which would have grave results on the movement for Indian democracy both here and in India.

Sound advice this, but it seems Dadabhai had been misled by some of his supporters, not altogether disinterested, into thinking that he had a fairly good chance of success; or, perhaps, he thought history was repeating itself and that he might, if he persevered, come out triumphant in the end, as he had at Central Finsbury. He informed the President of the Association that with the support promised to him there were very good chances of success. "I feel," he added, "that the position I occupy is a justifiable one." He might be right, or he might be wrong; once he was convinced that the position taken up by him was unexceptionable, nothing could move him or hamper his course.

The executive of the Association then decided to recommend Sir Robert Peel to the Association, at its annual meeting, as candidate for the Division. At the meeting, held on March 24, the President explained that there were two parties in the constituency—the Wightmanites and the Naoroji-ites. He did not belong to either party; he had hoped that there would be a chance of burying the hatchet; but in his efforts for unity he had been flouted by both sides. The executive had, therefore, hit upon a third candidate in order to heal the differences.

The question before the meeting was: should they hear Sir Robert Peel? It was submitted, on behalf of Dadabhai, that it was not fair to introduce another candidate. A resolution was moved to the effect that the previous decision regarding the

adoption of Dadabhai as a candidate should be adhered to. The Chairman, however, declined to accept it, on the ground that that question was not before the meeting. A resolution to refuse to hear Sir Robert Peel was then carried.

On April 10, Dadabhai received a letter from the Secretary of the Association, inquiring, on behalf of the executive, whether he would submit his claims to the Liberal Whip, Herbert Gladstone, "for the purpose of arbitration by three gentlemen appointed by him, one of whom should be a Labour Member." Dadabhai refused. Immediately there were rumours of an impending election. It was reported that the Tories were dissatisfied with Fred Horner, the sitting member for North Lambeth, and that he might tender his resignation any moment. A special meeting of the Association was, therefore, hurriedly called with a view to selecting a Liberal candidate for the Division. Horner contradicted the report and said he had no intention whatever of resigning his seat. The Political Council of the North Lambeth Liberal and Radical Club also issued a statement, accusing Wightman's supporters of dishonourable tactics to get behind Dadabhai's acceptance as Parliamentary candidate and alleging that certain officials of the Association had "turned tail" on Dadabhai. At a special meeting, held on April 23, the Chairman stated that the executive had met and recommended by fifteen votes against three that the Association should support Wightman. Dadabhai's friends moved an adjournment. It was lost, the motion for adopting Wightman was carried by sixty-one votes against thirty-four.

Absolutely unperturbed, Dadabhai went his way, making a house to house canvass. Advancing age made no difference to him. If anything, he appeared to get more virile and more militant as he grew older. The local papers announced that Lord Salisbury's "black man" had appointed as his agent Arthur Allgood, who had made a name as an election agent to the Stepney Liberal and Radical Association. Under the auspices of the Lambeth District Trades and Labour Council, representing trade unions, temperance and other progressive organizations in North Lambeth,

a conference was held, on April 27, to consider the political situation in the Division. Dadabhai was present. He was asked whether he would stand under the auspices of the Labour Representation Committee. He replied that he must be considered as much a Labour candidate as anyone there present. In fact, he had been relying upon the whole-hearted support of Labour and was quite willing to fight under the banner of Labour. Further, in the interests of Labour he would vote in favour of a Bill for State aid for the blind and would support State maintenance of school children up to the age of sixteen. The motion to confirm the previous resolution that he should be the candidate for the constituency was then carried.

Into this contest Dadabhai threw his whole soul and energy. The task of canvassing personally every elector in so large a constituency as North Lambeth was a tedious and laborious one, but it was very nearly accomplished. Besides visiting some six thousand voters, he toiled intermittently till the end of the year 1905, organizing and educating the constituency in progressive ideals.

Wightman and his supporters tried their best to disparage the Indian candidate. References were openly made to money having been spent and other questionable methods having been resorted to in securing support for Dadabhai. He repudiated the insinuations and allegations, and two of his British friends, Birdwood and Wedderburn, rushed to his aid. They wrote to the Press, asserting, in most emphatic terms, that Dadabhai was incapable of the questionable practices attributed to him. In a letter published in the *Lambeth Mercury*, dated May 9, Birdwood wrote:

Having intimately known Mr. Naoroji in his public and private life, here and in India, for nearly fifty years, I know him to be a man utterly incapable of seeking to obtain any private or public object by illegal or otherwise unworthy means, and everyone knows him to be a man of remarkable elevation, rectitude, and strength of character, and a man of great ability and exceptional knowledge of both English and Indian political questions, and above all a man of the widest and deepest enthusiasm for humanity,

and capable of making any sacrifice of self for what he, rightly or wrongly, deems to be the welfare of the Empire and its many-languaged peoples. . . . I have all my life been opposed to Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji in municipal and national politics, but in the circumstances of the personal attack that has been made on him, I must speak out on behalf of a man whose warm friendship for myself I regard as the highest honour I could enjoy.

Wedderburn, too, wrote to the same journal:

I never met anyone more purely unselfish, and more entirely devoted to the cause of the people. . . . I have, as his fellow-worker for many years, had the best opportunities of judging, and I can say that he is incapable of deviating from the strictest rectitude.

Subsequently, seeing that the feeling against Dadabhai was very strong, Wedderburn tried to persuade Dadabhai to retire from the field, but he replied:

I cannot withdraw from the contest *on any account*. I shall be 80 next September and this is my *only* and *last* chance to stand. . . . Nobody knows better than you that I have no ambition or self-interest in this work, but simply a duty to humanity, to hundreds of millions of our suffering fellow-subjects in India and the suffering poor in this country. . . . During all these years Mr. Wightman and his friends have attacked me personally in the Press and on platforms. I have not said one unkind word against him or his friends.

While the local Liberals were putting every impediment in his way, Dadabhai received an appeal for funds from Augustine Birrell, President of the National Liberal Federation (March 26, 1904). In the year before, the executive of the Federation had felt compelled to make a strong appeal to all Liberals to form a National Liberal Campaign Fund and had asked for £50,000 for work that had to be done, if the Liberals were to win the General Election. They received £30,000, but wanted more.

Dadabhai pointed out in reply that he had always helped the Liberal cause, as far as his means permitted, in various ways,



and asked: "Now is it not very hard upon me that on the other side the party have not only never helped me to get a constituency, but that when I have succeeded in finding one for myself they have actively opposed me?" After describing what happened at Central Finsbury, he observed:

Now the same futile and wasteful course is being pursued in North Lambeth. Mr. Wightman is put up against me as second candidate and thus by splitting the vote it is being made certain that the seat will not be won for the Liberal Party. It is a strange irony of fate that the very person who by splitting the vote lost Kennington to the Liberal Party is now being made the instrument by Liberal officials themselves to prevent North Lambeth from being won to the Liberal side. . . . Is it not a misuse of the Liberal funds to use them for the purpose of preventing a seat being won by the Liberal Party by thus splitting the Liberal vote? . . . You are appealing for the Campaign Fund to help candidates with their election expenses, but when there is a candidate who does not ask for financial help, he is worried and opposed! . . . Poor India is looking to the Liberal Party to right its wrongs, and yet that party is opposing me.

The letter ended with a declaration in most emphatic terms that he was fully resolved to "contest the seat to the end," and there was a fight to the end, even though Wightman died when the time for the election was drawing near. The road should have been then clear for Dadabhai, especially as Horner, the Conservative candidate, was involved in financial troubles. The hostile members of the Liberal and Radical Association were, however, bent upon bringing another Liberal candidate into the field.

It was a ruthless attempt to rob Dadabhai of the fruit of his long and arduous toil in the constituency. Martin Wood appealed to the Central Liberal organization at Westminster not to allow such iniquitous proceedings at North Lambeth. The Council of the Liberal and Radical Club also sent a deputation to headquarters to point out that Dadabhai had been already in the field on the party ticket and that the London Liberal Federation should deprecate any attempt to put forward a new "official" candidate.

The Lambeth Association was thereupon asked to accept Dadabhai as its sole candidate. Corrie Grant, the Chairman of the Federation, specially attended a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Association to urge this line of action, but he found the feeling strongly against the Parsi candidate. Even at the risk of splitting the vote, Dadabhai's opponents were determined to go forward. The Central Office had, therefore, to bow to the feelings of the majority of the local leaders. Horatio Myer, a bedstead manufacturer, who had a long record of civic service as well as a long purse, was selected as Parliamentary candidate.

Feeling ran very high among the supporters of the rival Liberal candidates. The Political Council of the North Lambeth Liberal and Radical Club passed a resolution expressing its profound disgust with the action of the officials of the London Liberal Federation. On the other hand, three of the members of the Association jointly attacked Dadabhai in the Press. Dadabhai placed the matter in the hands of his solicitor, with the result stated in a letter sent by him to the *Morning Post* (January 6, 1906). His client, said he, had "suffered during the past three years from a large amount of slander and misrepresentation, without any tangible charge which could be investigated" having ever been made against him.

Now, however, that two of his enemies in North Lambeth have thought fit to write to your columns, making vague charges against him (he added), such slanders have received additional circulation and colour. . . . I have therefore issued writs against three of the persons complained of.

Nothing further, however, was done in the matter. On behalf of Myer it was urged that Dadabhai was never the candidate of the Liberal authorities for the Division. Thereupon W. Hanmer Owen wrote to the *Westminster Gazette* (January 10, 1906) that Dadabhai had gone to North Lambeth on the written invitation of the Liberal and Radical Association and that he had a letter in his possession written by the Secretary to the Association, intimating that at a meeting held on November 26 Dadabhai had been "selected as the Parliamentary candidate."

Confusion was caused by the opposition offered to Dadabhai by the Liberal Association and the support given to him by the Liberal Club in North Lambeth. In India the Club's support was taken to be the Association's. Various individuals and organizations passed resolutions thanking the Association for selecting Dadabhai as its candidate, while some of its members were circulating untrue reports calculated to improve the chances of success of the rival candidate put up against him! One of the allegations was that the poor starving people of India were gulled into giving their hard-earned money to Dadabhai on the pretence that he had been working for their welfare! However, the main argument of the opponents against Dadabhai was that he was much too old, and that, if elected, he would devote himself entirely to the concerns of India. One of the electors, S. H. Swinny, thereupon wrote to the *Daily News* (January 2, 1906):

May I be allowed to ask why he is too old to represent the constituency when he is young enough to preside at a platform in the Hyde Park demonstration against Chinese Labour, to be chosen to move one of the principal resolutions at an important democratic gathering, to act as a member of the General Committee of the National Liberal Club and to canvass thousands of electors of North Lambeth? If he can do all this, surely he is not to be rejected because of the long life he has devoted to the cause of Liberalism and Labour.

Support to Dadabhai came also from unexpected quarters. Victor Rogers, who had worked against him whilst Wightman was in the field, also wrote to the *Daily News* (January 2):

It is not now a question of Mr. Naoroji or Mr. Wightman . . . and there is no justification for bringing in a new candidate at the last moment and jeopardize what would otherwise be a safe seat. As to Mr. Naoroji's age, how much younger are our present Prime Minister and Lord Ripon? We do not expect Mr. Naoroji to be the leader of the Liberal Party! But for the "methods" of these misguided people we might have been a united party in North Lambeth.

Dadabhai's address to the electors was issued on January 4. Coming from his pen, it was an exceptionally brief document, covering only four small pages in print. "I am a labour man in the truest sense of the word," he said, "and when I was in Parliament, I supported the labour cause, which is also the Liberal cause and the cause of the whole community. I am in accord with the programme of the principal Labour organizations."

This programme included Home Rule, education, temperance, free trade, and opposition to the introduction of indentured Chinese Labour into the Transvaal for the benefit of mine-owners. A special item was India.

India (he said) lies under a heavy burden of grievous wrongs unknown in this country. She has no representation in the House of Commons . . . But the masses of the people of India turn to the democracy of England for redress. . . . May I ask you, therefore, not to forget the starving and famine-stricken millions of your Indian fellow-subjects on the day of the poll?

Two days later, Martin Wood gave encouraging news:

As to your electoral position, I have been making such inquiries as were open to me. One good point I learn, namely, that Frank Smith is not setting up against you. On the other hand, I have been assured *confidentially* that Herbert Gladstone did make serious personal efforts to secure unity amongst Lambeth "Liberals" and thus abate the factious opposition against you of the L.C.C. gang. But it seems H. G.'s efforts did not succeed. . . . If there be really no third candidate, you will have a very good chance against the local Myer—except his lavish expenditure!

The electors, however, showed that they were more concerned about their local wants than the needs of India, and they returned Myer to Parliament. He received 2,162 votes, against 1,904 recorded in favour of the Conservative candidate, Major Gastrell, and only 733 votes polled by Dadabhai.

India heard the news with deep regret. Soon a report went round that after this defeat the hero of a thousand battles

contemplated doffing the armour. Dadabhai, however, wrote to Wacha (March 29):

I have no intention of returning at present to India. As I have said before, all will depend upon circumstances. I am not in any way influenced by any disappointment. I am always prepared for them, and, leaving them behind, I go on with my work. I never worry over them.

How gracefully he took his defeat is shown by the following observation in the *South London Press* (January 20):

Mr. Naoroji is generous. Questioned as to the result of the North Lambeth election, he remarked that he had nothing to say except that he was pleased that a Liberal had won the seat.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### CALCUTTA CONGRESS

THE time for the twenty-second session of the Congress was drawing near. It was an occasion for stock-taking. With the coming of age of the national political organization of the country, had India obtained her birth-right? If not, did not the "mendicant policy" of the elders stand condemned as barren? That, at any rate, was the opinion of young India. A conflict, therefore, arose over the question of the ideals and methods of work of the Congress. Young India demanded a proper constitution and a vitalizing programme for the Congress—a reconstitution of the political life of the country. The "old-world politicians," who had been carrying on the Congress work in their own way for twenty years, paid no heed to this demand. It was, however, not a mere emotional conflict, nor was it a personal conflict for ascendancy, it was essentially an intellectual conflict, a conflict of ideology. Self-government under British paramountcy was the goal of the old school, the ideal of the new school was national autonomy, freedom from all foreign control.

This antithesis between the viewpoints of the two sections showed a revolutionary change in the mind of the people. Indeed, for the rulers, it marked a dangerous phase in the political education of the country, and it caused no little concern among official circles and the European community generally. For a long period the British and the Anglo-Indian Press had affected supreme unconcern about the manifestations of political unrest in India, but they could not now ignore the striking change that had come over the country. The ranks of the national party had been reinforced by discontented youths as to whose temper there could be little doubt. The fulminations of the Congress, though

provoking, had been practically harmless. Despite twenty-one years of hard and apparently vain patriotic toil, its leaders and members as a class had amazingly adhered to its fundamental principles of loyalty and constitutional methods. In that sort of agitation there was no menace to British supremacy. But the young rebels were determined to give a blow to that supremacy.

There was, however, no desire as yet, except among a handful of revolutionaries, to appeal to force. That would have been suicidal. There was, however, such a weapon as boycott to which, thought the young enthusiasts, they could safely resort—boycott of British goods and, if need be, of the Councils. They believed they could, without going beyond the law and the Constitution, bring the authorities to their knees by refusing to associate with Government and by withholding from it all voluntary and honorary service; and they defied any one to say that their ideal was not legitimate or that their method was not constitutional.

Such was the conflict between the two sections—the moderates and the extremists, as they were called, during the year 1906. The question which then agitated them most was, who should be the President of the Congress for that year? The elders were in danger of being swamped by the Bengal delegates, a large majority of whom and the extremists favoured the selection of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who had suffered imprisonment in his fight for freedom. The Bengal leaders, Surendranath Banerjea and Bhupendranath Basu, however, forestalled the Tilakites by asking Dadabhai by cable whether in the event of his being elected as President, he would accept the office. They were confident that even the most rabid extremist would not think of opposing the nomination of one whose life had been given wholly to the country, who had stirred the hearts of his countrymen for two generations, who had the knack of bringing together conflicting forces and making them operate towards one end, whose word carried unequalled authority, and who was revered throughout the land. The weather-beaten pilot, over whose head the storms

of no less than eighty-one years had swept, did not for a moment pause to consider the hardships of the voyage, the danger to his health, or of the much greater risk of offending one party or the other, or both, and damaging his reputation as the Nestor of Indian politics. He was loved and revered as the Grand Old Man of India, but he had not yet ceased to be the ideal young man of India. With the ardour and optimism of youth, he promptly replied that he would accept the office.

The Tilakites saw that they were outwitted; whilst acquiescing in the selection, they condemned the action of the two leaders as unconstitutional. They, however, justified their action on the ground that the Congress had not laid down any definite procedure for the election of President and that there were precedents in favour of the procedure followed by them. Be that as it may, their action was ratified by a formal resolution passed unanimously by the Reception Committee.

Even from the point of view of the extremists, no more felicitous selection could have been made. Not merely because in Dadabhai the Congress had secured a President of ripe experience, possessing sweetness of temper and infinite patience and tact, but also because he occupied a position much nearer the advanced wing of the Congress than any one of the moderate party. He was neither a moderate nor an extremist, he had never hesitated to speak freely in the language of his heart and he was not the man to lower the standard with a view to placating one side or the other. After the repressive regime of Lord Curzon, his words invariably breathed fire. He had already asserted and could assert over again what the extremists had been urging with double the force and effect with which any one of them could have done. True, he was one of those who still believed in a constitutional struggle for progressive expansion of political freedom and whose ambition stopped short at placing India on a level with the self-governing colonies. But he was no longer the same submissive supplicant that he was in his earlier years, praying for justice before the bar of British public opinion.

We have already noticed the tone of his latest speeches and



letters. Let us recall one or two more utterances. Speaking at the Newington Reform Club, Walworth, he said:

One of the arguments put forward in defence of the system was that the British prevented the different peoples of India from plundering each other. That was only a half truth; the whole truth was that they prevented the different peoples from plundering each other in order that they themselves might plunder all. Then they were told that the British had introduced security of property, but only in order that they might carry it away with perfect security. As to the security of life, it was said that the old mental despots used to kill thousands and thousands, and harass the people. If that was so, the British Government, with great ingenuity and scientific precision, was killing millions by famines and plagues, and starving scores of millions. . . . The Anglo-Indians, or the British, were like clever surgeons who, with the sharpest scalpels, cut to the very heart, and drew every drop of blood without leaving a scar.

Again, in a letter to the *Daily News*, dated April 21, 1905, he asked an English correspondent the following question:

Suppose, by some mischance England came under French or German or some alien despotic government, in the same condition and under the same circumstances as India is at present, will he not, as an Englishman, do his utmost to throw off "the heaviest of all yokes," the yoke of the stranger, even though all Englishmen were full of all the faults which the Anglo-Indians, rightly or wrongly, ascribe to the Indians? Will he not as an Englishman at once tell me, "Corrupt or not corrupt, faults or no faults, a Briton shall never be a slave"? And yet he coolly justifies and assumes the right divine of making other people slaves!

In the course of several speeches Dadabhai had urged, for more than three years, that no palliatives for the "draining and bleeding" could do any good and that the only remedy was self-government which alone could bring prosperity to any country. Once more in his message to Gokhale, on the eve of the 1905 Congress, he had summed up his demands in these words:



DADABHAI NAOROJI  
(about 1906)



We require, on the one hand, to inspire the people of India at large with the desire of attaining and enjoying their birth and pledged rights and the absolute necessity of freedom and self-government like that of the colonies for their material and moral development, progress and prosperity . No palliatives of any kind whatever, no mere alteration and tinkering of the mechanical machinery of administration can or will do any good at all. . . . Self-government is the only remedy for India's woes and wrongs. For this purpose, we must strengthen the Congress, to go on making every possible effort to accomplish this end, which is quite practicable

If Dadabhai had gone so far in 1905, the extremists might well have entertained the hope that he might go a step further in 1906. All opposition to his election as President was withdrawn.

Those who were canvassing for Tilak (wrote Surendranath Banerjee to Dadabhai on October 25, just before his formal election) have given us the assurance that they will unanimously join in electing you as President and have authorized me to communicate the fact to you. Reuter has wired out to this country that you have booked your passage provisionally for the 30th November. You have saved us from a great crisis.

Simultaneously with the official invitation, Dadabhai received a letter of welcome from Motilal Ghose—rather tear-stained, for with the note of welcome was blended a wail concerning the woes of Bengal:

So you are coming (he wrote). You are welcome, thrice welcome. You are aware that a change has come over the people. The Congress as it is, cannot satisfy them. The method must be changed and you yourself latterly acknowledged it in many of your speeches . . . The Indian people want a practical scheme from you, so that the Congress programme may be an all-year-round affair and keep the entire nation interested in it. Now it is an organization of the upper five, the lower millions knowing nothing and caring nothing for it. Some such direction should, therefore, be given to it as to make it really a national thing and an object of attraction to the highest and the lowest.

Ghose then gave a recital of the arbitrary acts of Government and related in what an excited state of mind the people of Bengal were at the moment. He also pointed out how sharp the deplorable cleavage between the two factions was. It required considerable courage to step into the breach; the chances of reconciliation were remote, but Dadabhai had already agreed to enter the arena of the strife in obedience to the imperative call of his countrymen. He definitely arranged to leave London on November 29.

A complimentary breakfast meeting of friends of India was held at the Westminster Palace Hotel on November 20 to bid him God-speed. Addressing the gathering, Wedderburn, who presided, observed:

The repression and reaction of the last twenty years has undoubtedly driven many to despair and, deeming constitutional agitation a failure, some think passive resistance was the only available policy. India thus stands at the parting of the ways and, by universal consent, Mr. Naoroji is the man born to set things right. He goes out as a perfectly free hand and not as the leader of any party.

Speaking as a friend of fifty years' standing, Samuel Smith added:

A more single-minded man was never born, and though I did not quite agree with Mr. Naoroji on all points, we have learnt to respect each other, each believing that the other was doing his best for the cause. Mr. Naoroji would go out as a peace-maker in somewhat anxious and troubled times, which were causing much concern to those who were friends of India. The people of this country were earnestly desirous for the well-being of their Eastern Empire. If mistakes were made, it was not with their consent or knowledge. There was a period some years since when a bastard Imperialism prevailed in this country—a period of reaction. But now we have passed from that. . . . If our Indian friends would only exercise a little patience, they will find one reform after another come easily and naturally. The seed has been sown. The fruit is ripening and will soon be garnered and I hope that our guest will live to partake of some of it.

The Honourable Mr. Justice B. J. Wadia, who was then in London as a law student, gave a charming etymological epigram of Dadabhai's name. His very name, he said, carried with it the attributes of a great patriot: *Dada* (father) of all India by universal consent, and *Bhai* (brother) of those who suffer and live under suffering, the first of India's sons working for the *Naoroz* (New Day) of India's liberty and emancipation. This epigram might perhaps have gained in brilliance if, taking cognizance of the suffix *ji*<sup>1</sup> (Lord), the speaker had designated Dadabhai as the Lord of the New Day (*Naoroz*) of ampler life.

In a brief reply, Dadabhai hailed the activity which had produced differences of opinion in India. It spoke of life.

During the first fortnight of December, the whole of India was following in thought the progress across the seas of the P. and O. Company's steamship *Arcadia*, which was carrying on board the President-elect of the Congress. He landed in Bombay on December 14, where he received a markedly demonstrative welcome. In Calcutta, too, there was a personal warmth and spontaneity in the demonstration of people's love and reverence for him, recalling the scenes during his triumphal march in 1893.

The Calcutta Congress was the largest political gathering witnessed in India. The address of welcome delivered by Dr. Rash Behari Ghose was typical of the views of the advanced section of Congressmen. He stoutly defended *Sivadeshi* and Boycott and reminded the audience that the wounds of partition were still as sore as ever.

The keynote of Dadabhai's address was *Swaraj*. He had been claiming it for some years past and others, notably Tilak, were reinforcing the demand, as the only solution for the ills of India, but this was the first occasion when the demand was made from the Congress platform, and it thrilled the audience and the whole country from end to end. It was the first session of the Congress

<sup>1</sup> The word *ji* has an aristocratic pedigree. It comes from the Sanskrit *Arya* (noble-born), which became *Ajja* in Prakrit and *ji* in contemporary Indian languages. *Vide Jawaharlal Nehru. an Autobiography*, p. 30.

after its coming of age, and it was time, said Dadabhai, that they should carefully consider what the position of Indians then was and what their future should be. He did not intend to repeat his lamentations over the past. He would look only to the future.

What position did the Indians hold in the British Empire? Were they British citizens or not? The moment Indians came under the British flag, they became free British citizens and their rights as such were beyond question. They had every reason to claim all British rights as their birth-right and also as rights solemnly pledged to them. Just as the administration of the United Kingdom in all services, departments and details was in the hands of the people of that country, so should it be in India. As in the United Kingdom and the Colonies all taxation and legislation and all power of spending the taxes were in the hands of the representatives of the people, so should it be in India, and the financial relations between England and India must be adjusted on a footing of equality.

We do not ask any favours (he added) We want only justice. Instead of going into any further divisions or details of our rights as British citizens, the whole matter can be comprised in one word—"Self-government," or *Swaraj*, like that of the United Kingdom or the Colonies.

The next important question was whether it was practicable to grant Indians the rights of self-government at once and, if not, when and in what way. The whole machinery of Indian government could not certainly be broken up and the system of self-government introduced all at once. The time had, however, arrived for the transfer to begin.

The peasants of Russia are fit for and obtained the Duma from the greatest autocrat in the world, and the leading statesman, the Prime Minister of the free British Empire (Campbell-Bannerman), proclaimed to the world, "the Duma is dead, long live the Duma!" Surely, the fellow-citizens of that Empire, by birth-right and pledged rights, are far more entitled to self-government, a constitutional representative system, than the peasants of Russia

I do not despair. It is futile to tell me that we must wait till all the people are ready. The British people did not so wait for their Parliament.

Dadabhai then proceeded to deal with the most crucial question regarding methods:

I have been, for some time past, repeatedly asked (he said) whether I really have, after more than half a century of my own personal experience, such confidence in the honour and good faith of British statesmen and Government as to expect that our just claim to self-government as British citizens will be willingly and gracefully accorded to us with every honest effort in their power, leaving alone and forgetting the past

Proceeding to give a full and free answer to this question, he related how his faith in British justice had sustained him for so many years, but how, owing to the non-fulfilment of solemn pledges, a change had taken place in the mind of the educated:

Since my early efforts I must say that I have felt so many disappointments as would be sufficient to break any heart and lead one to despair and even, I am afraid, to rebel. . . But I have not despaired . . . You may think it strange. I stand before you with hopefulness. I have not despaired for one reason and I am hopeful for another reason. I have not despaired under the influence of the good English word, which has been the rule of my life. That word is "persevere" . . . As we proceed, we may adopt such means as may be suitable at every stage, but persevere we must to *the end*. Now the reason of my hopefulness after all my disappointments. And this also under the influence of one word "Revival"—the present revival of the true old spirit and instinct of liberty and free British institutions in the hearts of the leading statesmen of the day. . . . Within the short life that may be yet vouchsafed to me, I hope to see a loyal, honest, honourable, and conscientious adoption of the policy of self-government for India—and a beginning made at once towards that end.

Turning then to the burning questions of the day, Dadabhai condemned the Bengal partition as a "bad blunder for England."



He hoped it would yet be rectified. *Swadeshi* was not a new thing. It had existed in Bombay for many years past. "I am a free trader," he added. "I am a member, and in the Executive Committee of the Cobden Club for twenty years, and yet I say that *Swadeshi* is a forced necessity for India in its unnatural economic muddle. As long as the economic condition remains unnatural and impoverishing . . . the talk of applying economic laws to the condition of India is adding insult to injury."

Then followed a fervent appeal for a thorough political union among people of all creeds and classes.

I do not know what good fortune may be in store for me during the short period that may be left to me, and if I can leave a word of affection and devotion for my country and countrymen, I say: Be united, persevere, and achieve self-government so that the millions now perishing by poverty, famine, and plague, and the scores of millions that are starving on scanty subsistence may be saved, and India may once more occupy her proud position of yore among the greatest and civilized nations of the world.

It was meant to be, and was really, a conciliatory speech. There was not a word in it which was in any sense inflammatory. Strongly controversial topics such as the question of *Swadeshi* were disposed of in a few sentences; the boycott was not even mentioned. For once, the usual language of the heart was not there. The air was, therefore, loud with debate as to where Dadabhai stood and how far he would allow the advanced party to proceed. That party had by no means got what it wanted. There was scarcely anything in the address to bridge the gulf between the two parties. Instead of recommending any change in methods and tactics, the President had once more adjured his countrymen to put their faith in the British people's sense of justice and fair play, and to tread the same old path which, it seemed, led nowhere. He had held out hopes resting on the revival of Liberalism in England, whereas India had despaired of obtaining justice even at the hands of the Liberal Party. On the other hand, the moderates were pleased. The demand for *Swaraj* under British paramountcy, tempered with advice to persevere in the same old path of

constitutional agitation, vindicated the attitude taken up by the members of the old school. The *Bengalee* hailed the Presidential address as the political gospel of the new era, while *Bande Matram* shed tears at "the great refusal."

What about the Anglo-Indian journals? So far as the extremists were given a cold shoulder, they were pleased; but the unequivocal demand for *Swaraj* introduced a new element in the political struggle, which spelt disaster for the European community. The Presidential address was, therefore, condemned as a surrender to the extremists. In echoing the indignant outburst of that community, one of the journals observed that the contention that the inhabitants of India were entitled to all the political rights, privileges, and franchises which the inhabitants of England enjoyed had no more root in history or in law than it had in common sense. "We have won India by the sword," it added, "and it is well for the small and highly educated classes, which are alone represented at the Congress, that the British sword stands between them and their native enemies. That is the fundamental fact in the whole situation which makes all claims for full self-government in India absurd."

But for the moral to be drawn from it, it would not have been now necessary to refer to the levity with which such a problem of far-reaching significance to the British Empire was discussed by the Anglo-Indian Press at that time. Before the representative element was introduced in the municipal bodies and legislative councils, journals of this type had simply refused to believe that representative institutions could ever flourish in India. In 1852 the demand for such institutions was likened to an attempt to assimilate the natural productions of the two hemispheres.<sup>1</sup> When, to their dismay, such institutions were established and the people proved their capability to run them efficiently and asked for self-government, even Anglo-Indian papers of high standing ridiculed the demand. Within ten years, however, responsible government had to be proclaimed by the Secretary of State for India as the goal of British policy.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Chapter V, p. 58 *ante*.

Thereafter, when India demanded "Dominion Status," once more the critics ejaculated "impossible," forgetting that the world moves. Soon afterwards, when a section of the people expressed its determination to strive for and die for Independence, some of those journals came forward with the assurance that Dominion status was implicit in all the declarations made since the year 1917 and that the question was only one of ways and means and stages. Dadabhai, who was charged with talking nonsense, pernicious nonsense, at the Calcutta Congress, had asked for nothing more.

There were violent scenes at the Subjects Committee meeting over the refusal to submit resolutions for extending boycott all over India. Some of the extremists left the meeting, headed by Bepin Chandra Pal and Khaparde. There was, for a while, jubilation in the anti-Congress camp, but those who welcomed the split were amazed to find a display of unanimity at the Congress session. There was heated discussion, no doubt, on the resolution moved by Ambica Charan Muzumdar, seconded by Pal, that the boycott movement, inaugurated in Bengal, by way of protest against the partition of that Province, "was, and is, legitimate." The extremists put their own interpretation on the resolution, claiming that it applied to the whole country, and the moderates interpreted it as confined to Bengal only.

A united front had, however, to be presented. Tilak had the patriotism and the statesmanship to realize it. Despite his disappointment, he struck a refreshing note of unity. Supporting the *Swadeshi* resolution, he said he was glad that they had arrived at a satisfactory solution, because their Anglo-Indian friends had predicted that the twenty-second Congress would meet with premature death immediately after the attainment of the age of majority. The prediction, however, had been falsified under the able, impartial, and judicious guidance of the veteran leader in the Chair. All differences, continued Tilak, had been squared, both parties had approached the question in a spirit of conciliation and met halfway.

On the closing day of the Congress, Surendranath Banerjea

presented to Dadabhai, on behalf of Mr. Kambli, of Poona, a *Swadeshi* umbrella. Everything in connexion with it, he said, was *Swadeshi*, with the exception of the wire. He expressed the hope that under the home-made umbrella all India might stand united. Dadabhai remarked:

The labours of the past fifty years have not been in vain. If Congress has had no other result, it has placed before us the "clear star," as Sir Campbell-Bannerman would say, of self-government. I regard it as the best result of the political work during the past fifty years that we have now decided upon a goal.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

### RETURN HOME

THE split in the Congress camp was for the time being healed, the Congress session was brought to a peaceful termination. It was the general opinion that the difficult mission, courageously undertaken by Dadabhai, had been creditably accomplished. With that satisfaction he returned to London, on February 8, to continue his fight for freedom, but the strain had been too great for a frame enfeebled by the wear and tear of more than fifty years of strenuous public life. He was no longer the same young man at eighty-one that he was before he had embarked on that mission. He then looked such a picture of health that hopes were running high that he would live to be a centenarian. An echo of these hopes was heard in the following stanzas which appeared in *India*:

A harvest full, its seed long sown  
Be yours ere life be done!  
Hopes ne'er proved vain that steadfast hold  
At fourscore years and one.

In heart and mind unchanged, tho' past  
Life's full allotted span,  
We wish an honoured century  
For India's Grand Old Man!

BIG BEN

"I am in the best of health," was Dadabhai's reply to a question put to him by a representative of the *Tribune* who had called on him on his birthday on September 4, 1906. "I am a little uncomfortable at having to wear a Russel-cord coat when I would prefer a muslin jacket, with a shirt of the same material. Other-

wise I should love this heat, which is reminiscent of my own country."

To what do you attribute your good condition? (asked the journalist).

To life-long abstinence (said Dadabhai), to avoiding tobacco, to eschewing spices and condiments and to working hard. I breakfast at 8.30. Then I write at home until it is time to go to the office. From 11 until 7.45 I labour there, after which I dine. I walk for about an hour and then continue my work until midnight. My correspondence with India is enormous.

That youthful vigour and energy had gone—gone never to return again. Soon after his arrival in London he was prostrated by an attack of bronchitis, which caused great anxiety to his friends. His grand-daughters Gosi (afterwards Mrs. Maneck Captain) and Nargiz (afterwards Mrs. Dorab Captain), who were in England, ran up to London to look after him. There was a slight recovery in the first week of March; on April 26 *India* announced the cheering news that the patient had greatly improved in health. A change at Bexhill-on-Sea led to further improvement. His medical advisers were, however, of opinion, and it was also the wish of his British friends, that he should retire from public life and spend his last days in his motherland, for the good of which he had spent the best strength of his life, there to be supported by the tenderness and care of his dear ones and cheered by the love and blessings of his countrymen.

And it is in India you should die (wrote Birdwood). That will give the necessary dramatic unity to your life, that dramatic emphasis to your life's work—that returning to die, and dying in your motherland—in the arms of your Earth Mother—that set the seal to your service, devotion, and inflexible loyalty to India.

Dadabhai, however, felt that his work for his country had not yet been completed. He had just launched a fresh crusade for obtaining self-government, and he was loath to leave his place in the fighting line before a single decisive battle had been won.

The advice of friends was reinforced by an appeal from home. It was a letter from Homi Dadina (July 20), in which he said:

Judging from what you write—this last Indian visit of yours has completely shattered your health—and it is only fair that you should give yourself complete rest for a long time. We are informed on all hands that your medical adviser is also of the same opinion, and though he has pressed you very much to retire for good, you decline to do so. Dr. E. Treasurywalla is about to return soon to India—cannot you see your way to bid good-bye to England and come and settle down to enjoy a little quiet rest in this town of your birth? You have served your country and rulers nobly, and this country can well afford to give you a little holiday. In fact the public think that your advice and counsel would be more beneficial to them here in this crisis through which the country generally is passing

In August there was a set-back. Indian astrologers were busy studying the horoscope of the sage, who appeared to have had one foot in the grave. One of them gave him a further lease of life for seven years. From Dadina duly conveyed the forecast to Dadabhai. Soon afterwards, there was a marked improvement in his health. The astrologer was right, but he was to prove wrong at the end of the seventh year when Dadabhai seemed to be good for at least seven years more.

It was arranged, when the patient seemed fit to undertake the long journey to India, that he should leave London towards the end of September. The members of the London Indian Society met at the Holborn Restaurant to give a send-off to their retiring general. Indians of all creeds and English friends of all shades of political thought attended the reception, but Dadabhai was not well enough to be present. The departure from London was postponed.

Dadabhai was removed to a nursing home in South Norwood. Here he gradually gained strength and was bearing up as well as he could for the long journey. The strong will-power, serene disposition, and buoyant spirit, which had sustained him in all his struggles, displayed themselves at their best during this

illness. On October 11, the day fixed for commencing the journey, the weather-gods were exceptionally propitious. Whereas during the preceding days the weather had been stormy, chilly and changeable, on the day of departure the sun shone brightly with the warmth of a mid-September day. Dadabhai was taken in an easy running motor car to Tilbury, and transferred to his berth in the *S.S. Moldavia* under the care of Dr. Treasurywalla and a trained nurse. The members of the London Indian Society had assembled there to present to him a farewell address. Although Dadabhai had stood the fatigue well, it would have been an ordeal for him to receive and reply to the address. It was, therefore, received by his grandson, Jal Naoroji, on his behalf.

Although Dadabhai was leaving England for good, the members of the Society wished that he should continue to be its President. Dadabhai would not consent. They then asked him to allow his name to be associated with the Society as Honorary President. Dadabhai agreed, but not without hesitation. He had seen young Indians in England drawn into something like a spirit of revolt. He had met in Calcutta several ardent young exponents of the gospel of violence. They looked upon outrages as the only effective weapon of political protest. Dadabhai feared that that gospel would spread throughout India and that it would also captivate the Indians resident in England. It was quite possible that youths stirred by the new doctrines, subversive of the policy of non-violence he had always advocated, would capture the Society. He unburdened his mind to his successor, Mr. J. M. Parikh, and told him that the moment the Society countenanced violence, his name should be removed from its roll. "My honour," said he, "is in your hands."

With these parting words quietly disappeared from English public life the illustrious Indian who had spent himself in his country's service. During half a century he had incessantly grappled with hard facts and figures concerning the woeful condition of his country and presented them to the British public, as none before him had done, and had done everything possible



to bring England and India together. A glowing tribute paid to him by Wedderburn on the occasion was accorded a prominent place in the *Daily News* of October 17:

Last Friday, at the age of eighty-three, Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji said good-bye to England for the last time, and sailed for India. The sands of life running very low, his heart worn out with many wars and eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot stars. What his feelings now may be I know not, but for half a century he has kept alive among Indians the belief that in the end England will be true to her own best traditions; that she will make of India a trusted partner, instead of a bond slave. . . . Like Edmund Burke, he has never lost faith in the "ancient and inbred integrity" of the British people.

Birdwood also took the opportunity to give expression to his admiration of the work accomplished by Dadabhai, in a letter which he wrote to the London correspondent of *The Times of India*:

Dadabhai Naoroji is a man in whom mind has the complete mastery of matter and who, it might be said, cannot be killed until he no longer desires to live. . . . In all my visits to him he has shown no thought of himself; all his thoughts, with all their clearness, insight and interests and play of dialectics and fancy, have been on his life's work, which seems ever before him, as not knowing a past or a future, but only an abiding present. And so, sitting and talking with him, one feels of him that even in the article of death, it would not be the death of what was really and truly Dadabhai Naoroji, but translation—a quick shift to immortal conditions.

After a fairly comfortable voyage, Dadabhai reached Aden on November 8, where he had a conversation with the leading citizens of Aden who were delighted to find him much better than they had expected. His health, however, seemed to give way during the voyage from Aden to Bombay: all demonstrations to greet him at the Apollo Bunder had, therefore, to be abandoned, and he was taken quietly from the docks to his residence at

Versova. Here he was taken charge of by his grand-daughter Meherbanoo, under whose loving care and skilful treatment he regained his health and strength within a very short time. She was relieved subsequently by Dadabhai's daughter, Manekbai, who gave up her medical appointment in Jamnagar to be near her father.

The first greeting Dadabhai received, as soon as the steamer entered the Bombay harbour, was from the Governor of Bombay, Sir George Clarke (afterwards Lord Sydenham). It cheered him up. During the second week of January the people of India heard with great satisfaction that Dadabhai had completely recovered from his illness. With the return of bodily strength his mind became active and alert as before. He did a lot of reading throughout the day, insisted on attending personally to all correspondence and pored over newspapers for hours together to keep himself acquainted with what was happening in the world generally and in India particularly.

The eighty-fourth year of the Grand Old Man was an occasion for special thanksgiving. The veteran who had passed through a critical illness had been spared to spend the closing years of his life in his native land, surrounded by members of his family and friends. He was in excellent health, was receiving visitors in the afternoon, going out for a drive every evening and enjoying reading books and newspapers and writing letters to his friends in India and England. "Dadabhai Day" was, therefore, celebrated with more than usual enthusiasm all over India. On this occasion also, the first to send him his greetings was Sir George Clarke. "I hope," said he, "you will be spared to see the passing of some of the clouds which darken the Indian sky and threaten the peaceful progress of the people." Dadabhai in return expressed his belief that the clouds would disperse and that a change for the better would take place if the necessary reforms were undertaken in time, restoring that faith in British justice which he always had and which he prayed India might "always have good cause to cherish."

"My correspondence is enormous," said Dadabhai when interviewed in England by a representative of the Press. It was scarcely less cyclopean when he was supposed to have retired from active life. While he was in England, he had to carry on ponderous correspondence concerning his varied activities, on behalf of his country, with various individuals and political and social organizations in the United Kingdom and India. None can read the immense mass of letters and memoranda which he wrote personally without being astounded at the energy and agility it attests. Besides the daily political and business letters, every week he received from his daughters, grand-children, and sons-in-law, scattered over different places in India and England, their weekly budgets of news concerning their studies, or other avocations, their needs and their amusements, their hopes and aspirations, accompanied, in the case of the grown-up children, with statements of accounts, and he replied to them regularly, expressing his joy or concern regarding the progress made by each or other incidents in their lives. In addition, he carried on a lengthy correspondence with the teachers of his grand-children from whom, too, he received periodical returns and reports giving in detail the progress made by their pupils in different subjects. Such domestic correspondence was, however, nothing compared with the miscellaneous correspondence entailed by inquiries and appeals, congratulations and greetings, coming from individuals and institutions from the four corners of the world. So long as the poor and the improvident are with us, so long as there is unemployment among people who are willing to work, so long will people in public life, particularly the soft-hearted, be flooded with piteous appeals for pecuniary help or work. Of these Dadabhai had, probably, the largest share, considering the unique position he occupied as the unofficial ambassador of India in England and considering the reputation he had for service and self-sacrifice. Young men desiring to go to Europe from India or Africa for study or business, students stranded in England or other parts of Europe, parents of young men who after or before completing their studies were in no

mood to return home, Indian women deserted by Indian husbands, European women who had married good-for-nothing Asiatics, fathers and mothers horrified at the news of conversion of their sons to Christianity, all sought his help. Similarly, Englishmen and Englishwomen in distress, or interested in welfare work, approached him almost daily for help.

Dadabhai had made it a point to acknowledge all communications, and he complied with as many appeals as he could. Even if he could not render any assistance, he would put in a word of sympathy. Prisoners sentenced to death, or imprisonment, on charges of arson or murder or cheating, dismissed employees, ill-treated workmen, hard-worked postmen, dissatisfied contractors, duped business men, European and Indian, all appealed to Dadabhai for redress. The petitions of several of them were presented by him, or through his good offices by others, to the Home Department, or to the Colonial Office, and even questions were asked on their behalf in the House of Commons. Each case entailed wearisome correspondence, but Dadabhai never grudged the time, trouble and expense involved. Among such cases there was one concerning a man in Teheran, who complained that he had been wrongfully dismissed from the telegraph service and asked Dadabhai to approach, on his behalf, John Morley or Edward Grey for justice!

Any request, emanating from any quarter, concerning the higher education or industrial training of Indian youths, or the political education of old or young, was welcome to Dadabhai. Knowing his willingness and readiness to help in such cases, people demanded all sorts of information and assistance from him. One student asked for particulars concerning available posts in banks; the father of another informed Dadabhai that "the nuptial ceremonies in connexion with the second marriage" of his son had just been consummated at Ahmedabad, and he wished to know the way in which assistant engineers were recruited for service. There was, however, nothing frivolous about most of the requisitions. They satisfied the patriotic impulse of the man to whom they were addressed. For instance, the Govern-

ment of Travancore sent two graduates for Associateship in Geology and Mining, and asked Dadabhai to help them and to keep an eye on them. Indians in South Africa and Indian students in Japan asked for Congress literature and other particulars. There was a constant flow of appeals for "some clement showers of generosity and benevolence," most of which he was obliged to turn down, but not infrequently young Indians succeeded in borrowing from him small loans which were advanced with practically no hope of recovery.

The following amusing illustration of Dadabhai's innate good nature to rush to the succour of anyone in trouble, deserving or undeserving, was given to the writer by C. M. Cursetji.

A Parsi doctor who had made something of a name in Bombay proceeded to London with his wife and children to practise there. He took a fine house in a fashionable locality, kept a smart brougham, liveried servants, and looked forward to lucrative business. But within no long period of time, living much beyond his means, he soon found himself in deep waters. Decried debts, default and claims followed, till, one day, court bailiffs got into the house. He made a pressing appeal to Dadabhai, who promptly arrived, looked into the trouble, settled and paid up the debts and so rescued the worthy doctor, who was, of course, profuse in thanks and promises, and by way of showing his gratitude finished up by inviting Dadabhai for the next day and treating him to a sumptuous lunch!

Till the end of his life the pressure of daily correspondence was considerable. An undergraduate from Agra College, a son of a rich zemindar, but a victim of a step-mother's wiles, wrote to him: "A sum of Rs. 300 will easily enable me to pass my B.A. Half of the above sum I can easily manage by selling my mare, which was given to me on my marriage, but for the remaining half *I must depend upon you.*"

Another, who described himself as "a native of Bombay, who has received a liberal education and is acquainted with the theory of carriage-building," wished to be enlightened on several points

regarding facilities in London or any province in India to learn the trade. A journalist in Mirzapur wanted answers to more than fifty queries regarding the balances kept by Government in England and India, the creation of a Central Bank in India, the reasons for and against its establishment, the conditions under which it should operate, the methods of meeting capital expenditure, the sale of Council bills, the exchange value of the rupee and level of prices, gold standard reserve, paper currency reserve, purchases of silver, hoarding, and "financial organization and procedure generally." To all such communications, replies, however brief, were sent, and they were mostly in Dadabhai's hand. Authors sent him their books soliciting his opinion, editors of journals asked for articles, and not a few individuals wrote long letters merely to air their views on current political and economic problems. To one such dilettante from North Kanara Dadabhai had to write (December 13, 1913):

As in the present state of my age and condition of health I am not able to devote much attention to public questions, you need not trouble yourself to write to me about them, especially in matters of details of existing administration.

Several people who sent him letters of congratulation on his birthday from different parts of India, China, Japan, Africa, and England, also appeared to have given little thought to his advanced age. They wrote sheets and sheets about themselves or public affairs. Till the last moment, however, until disabled, Dadabhai attended to all such correspondence personally, as may be gathered from the office copies of replies left behind in his own steady, unwearied hand.

Not a small portion of his correspondence was, however, of his own seeking. After a few months' rest, the recluse of Versova had plunged once more into the whirlpool of politics. Those were stirring days. Things were moving rapidly. With the change for the worse in the attitude of the Indian mind towards British rule, the attitude of the British mind appeared to be undergoing a change for the better towards the people of India. Undeterred

by anarchical activities on one side and angry cries for stern reprisals on the other, Lord Morley and Lord Minto were bent on meeting, as far as possible, the new aspirations which had sprung up among the people. Reforms were on the anvil. Dadabhai heard about it from Wedderburn and others; how could the father of the agitation for reform remain silent at such a juncture?

## CHAPTER XXXV

# RADIANT IN RETIREMENT

THROUGHOUT the year 1908 the bark of Indian politics was drifting in stormy waters. There was a definite split in the Congress camp, and the national organization was in imminent danger of being completely captured by the extremist section. Two different types of unrest combined to unnerve the authorities—one, the unrest of loyal subjects dissatisfied with Government for their failure to discharge their obligations to the people, the other, the unrest fomented by doctrines subversive of order and threatening the basis of constitutional society. It is unnecessary to refer to the outrages that followed one upon another. Those outbursts of violence on the part of the young rebels of the day were met by Government with repression. Repression, however, failed to repress and engendered new forces of disorder. The grim monster of anarchism followed in its wake, compelling Government to take further repressive measures.

The Radical of one generation is apt to become the Tory of the next and to look askance at the forward movement of that generation. This could not be said of Dadabhai. While the other political leaders disowned and denounced the forward section, his sympathies were with them. His hopes were centred not so much in his immediate followers as in the youth of the country stirred by national consciousness and patriotic fervour. At the same time, he stoutly deprecated violence. In his message of thanks to his countrymen for the numerous proofs of their goodwill he stated

I take this opportunity to entreat that all resort to violence should be avoided. Our grievances are many and they are just. Maintain the struggle for essential reforms, with necessary



endeavours and self-sacrifice, peacefully, patiently and perseveringly, and appeal without fear or faltering to the conscience and righteousness of the British nation.

This message marked the opening of a new chapter in the story of Dadabhai's life. It heralded, so to say, the rebirth of his political life. He was now blest with sufficient physical and mental vigour to follow with interest, almost as intense as before, the progress of events in the country and once more to express his views and exert his influence thereon. The announcement of the Morley-Minto Reforms called to memory Morley's own words: "Every single right thing that is done by the legislature, however moderate may be its area, every single right thing is sure to lead to the doing of a great number of unforeseen right things." That instalment of reform, insignificant as it might appear today, was the fruit of his "long and untiring labours," as Wedderburn put it in his letter to Dadabhai (January 1, 1909).

What has now been accomplished, and what we trust must follow, is the result of persistent constitutional effort, and there is no one who has done as much as you have during all these dark years, to keep your countrymen in this safe path of progress. . . . It is interesting to look back to our *Minority Report*, and to see how many of our recommendations (which Lord George Hamilton did not even deign to notice!) have now been adopted.

The Reforms marked the first step of the authorities along the path of justice and rectitude. The best way to accelerate the pace of progress along that road, thought Dadabhai, was to encourage the statesmen who had taken that courageous step. He, therefore, wrote a personal letter to Lord Morley and Lord Minto, stating that their declaration of the Reforms had justified his faith in British character and had strengthened it. "after many a cruel disappointment bordering on despair."

The general hope now is that you will be able to complete early the adoption and practical application of these reforms successfully, with any reasonable and beneficial modification that

may be suggested by yourselves and the public opinion. I do not discuss details. . . . I wish only to remark that the Viceroy's council may also be left without an official majority, and that some consideration had been given to that unfortunate blunder—the partition of Bengal.

He had written that letter, he added, with mixed feelings of gratification and disappointment, for the fundamental reform, the holding of simultaneous examinations in India and in England for admission to the Civil Service, had been overlooked. He, however, did not wish to trouble them on the subject, when they had enough arduous work to get the reforms adopted by the Imperial Legislature. Within a short time, however, he took the opportunity to revert to the question. In his letter of April 3, offering to Lord Minto and Lord Morley "most grateful thanks for the appointment made of an Indian to the Viceroy's Council," he observed that India had not yet obtained "the absolutely necessary reform without which all other reforms would be more or less ineffective." There were two sides of the policy of British Government in India—one good, the other evil. In a lengthy appendix he gave extracts from the speeches and writings of English statesmen and administrators from 1764 to 1903. The consequences of the evils inseparable from the prevailing system of administration, about which the reader may now justifiably refuse to hear anything more, were then enumerated. He next dealt with the question of the Civil Service examination and expressed the hope that "the right beginning now made" would lead evolutionally "to the complete remedy of the inseparable evil by self-government, to England's glory all its own."

The letter and its appendices consisted of eighty typed sheets. But this was not all. In the following year (April 23, 1910) was issued from the sanctum of the "political recluse" another communication, dealing with the financial aspect of the problem and giving tables made up from official records, "to further illustrate the aspects and consequences of the evils complained of." These tables indicated the gross revenue of India per head of population. Three months later, a further letter, giving trade

statistics and other details, was sent to complete the picture of the condition of India under foreign domination. These epistles and the appendices attached to them made up, one might say, an abridged edition of *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*, revised up to date and annotated in the light of events subsequent to its compilation!

Despite such manifestations of his zeal and vigour and arduous effort in the cause of his country, this period of Dadabhai's life may be said to be one of comparative quiet and tranquillity. The only incident that marred his happiness was the death of his wife in the month of May. She had been absolutely unable to share his intellectual pleasures or to co-operate in his patriotic work. But their life was, nevertheless, one of unclouded harmony and affection. Messages of condolence came to Dadabhai from all quarters of the earth; the Governor of Bombay, Sir George Clarke, who was then in mourning over the death of his own daughter, being one of the earliest. "I can so perfectly feel for you," he wrote, "in the picture of my own sorrows."

The political situation grew worse and worse. The extremist section regarded the reforms as a concession to violence. Further reforms could only be wrung from unwilling hands by further violence. In his eighty-fifth birthday message, therefore, Dadabhai reverted to his counsel of non-violence.

Last year I entreated my countrymen "that all resort to violence should be avoided." Since then a most deplorable outrage has taken place in the assassination of Sir Curzon Wylie—who was, moreover, a friend to Indians, and that when we were already beginning to obtain reforms. It is only a sad consolation that another Indian, D. Lalkaka, redeemed the Indian character with his life. Those who resort to violence inflict the greatest possible injury to the Indian cause.

In the Bombay citizens' address, tendered to Dadabhai by a deputation appointed at the public meeting held on the occasion, it was stated that they would strive to do their duty with courage and self-sacrifice and would always "endeavour to keep within constitutional limits." That assurance was very gratifying to

Dadabhai. He was hopeful, he told them, that by that method and with self-sacrifice and persevering work their goal of reforms would be reached.

Twelve more months rolled by. The spectre of anarchism was still stalking the land. Dadabhai had, therefore, to reiterate, in his manifesto of 1910, his appeal to the anarchists to desist from violence.

Among the letters of congratulations received on his eighty-sixth birthday there was one from Dadabhai's grandson Jal, in which he said:

I fear that this will arrive a week later, but the wish itself will arrive in time by telepathic means. I do not remember whether you have any belief in such things as telepathy, but if Mr. W. T. Stead is to be believed, there is much truth in it. Your mathematical mind will probably give it a very short shrift . . . various people send you messages and greetings through me, all of which you will have to presume, as I am not capable of the mental gymnastics necessary to remember all the messages and the donors thereof.

A melancholy interest attaches to this letter. Just as the writer was handling it on June 28, 1938, he received the distressing news that Jal's quiet but useful life, brimful of love for his country, had been prematurely cut off. Only a few months before, in a vivid dream, Jal had seen Dadabhai walking along the Victoria Embankment in London, somewhat worried. "Hullo, Dad! What are you doing here?" asked Jal. "I am working here," replied Dadabhai. "I live in a hotel near by. I want all my papers edited. You had better do it." "Why don't you come back home with me?" asked Jal. Dadabhai agreed. Then Jal saw that they were both on the high seas. When they were nearing Bombay, Dadabhai appeared to have changed his mind. "I don't think I shall land with you," he said, "there will be too much fuss and noise. You take charge of the papers and I shall dictate the marginal notes."

Another notable letter received by Dadabhai during this time was from Jal's sister, Gosi, in which she said:

I met the South African Mr. Gandhi last summer. I found him an extremely interesting and sincere man *He simply worships you* I had a very long talk with him about the organization of the agitation in South Africa and all he said about it was that they had your example before them and they were following it with perfect faith

Dadabhai wrote in reply that he was very glad she had met "Mr. Gandhi, a very good man," who had been "fighting a great patriotic battle."

No detail concerning the Congress escaped Dadabhai's notice. He was pleased with the success of the 1909 session which met at a very critical period in the history of the national movement. "My congratulations," said he in a letter to Lala Harkisanlal (January 6, 1910), "for the success of the Congress. Punjab has vindicated its character for stalwartness."

Similarly, in connexion with the Congress session, he wrote to Surendranath Banerjea (October 10)

I am glad you have exhorted for large attendance at the next Congress. Mr. Wacha sent me a message from you when you were in Bombay about simultaneous examination. Write to me fully what it is. I hope you will do your utmost at the Congress to give prominence to the reform for simultaneous examinations for all the Indian services. In the Congress of 1906 in Resolution 9 it was section (a) which is still not attended to by Lord Morley.

Even at that age he must take pains to quote chapter and verse! Another interesting letter—one from Dadabhai's solicitor, Frank Birdwood (February 3)—gives a further glimpse of the study of the political recluse.

I am sending by separate post the U.S.A. statistics. They are dull reading to most of us, but I know that you will be able to extract pleasure and profit for all.

There is another letter, written by Dadabhai, to the Thakore Saheb of Gondal (January 31), showing the stuff with which he was feeding his mind:

Thanks for sending me the Administration Report for 1908/9. Kindly send me also of the two previous years. I have been sending cuttings from the Press as I come across them.

Surendranath Banerjea, on his return from England, once said to a friend: "Dadabhai is living in a sea of Blue Books." This was as true of his retreat at Versova as it was of his active life in England.

J. N. Gupta asked Dadabhai to give some reminiscences of Romesh Dutt, whose biography he had undertaken to write. Dadabhai replied that his papers had been all packed up and were in England. He was not, therefore, able to give him Dutt's letters. But of "personal interests" he recollected two. "When Dutt was invited by an Eastern England constituency (Yarmouth) to become a candidate for the House of Commons," he said, "I was very glad and readily agreed to give him a loan for immediate expenses. He did not, however, require it, as he did not contest. Once we met at a dinner when he told me that after all he was satisfied and agreed with me that the chief cause of all the difficulties of India was the drain to England."

Dutt was laying great stress on the defects in the Land Revenue system. Dadabhai feared it would divert attention from the fundamental cause of Indian poverty—the drain—and its remedy, self-government. In his letter of July 11, 1903, Dutt pointed out that in reality there was no difference between his views and Dadabhai's on the question of the drain.

I have never lost a single chance of urging that the drain from India is the cause of her poverty. I have said this again and again in my *Economic History* (1837-1900), which will appear next year. But this drain will not be stopped until you stop its main source—the land revenue, and therefore by endeavouring to restrict the land revenue I am doing exactly the same work which you are doing in endeavouring to stop the drain. Curiously enough, I am doing now exactly the same work which you were doing thirty years ago. I am reading your evidence before the Parliamentary Committee of 1873, and I notice how eloquently you pleaded against the excessive land assessment of some Talukas

of Poona. If the Government had listened to you in 1873, the Poona Riots of 1875 would have been avoided. If you were right in combining the land revenue question with the drain question in 1873, I am right in doing the same in 1903.

Early in the year Valentine Chirol of the Foreign Department of *The Times* came to India to study the political situation on the spot and particularly to gauge the degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with which the "Reforms" had been received. He brought with him a letter of introduction to Dadabhai from George Birdwood.

It may happen (wrote Birdwood) that you may feel able to see Mr. Valentine Chirol and yet be unable to converse with him. If so, simply see him for a moment only; he will be grateful to have the opportunity of saluting you in homage to the disinterestedness and honesty of purpose and devoutly inspired enthusiasm with which you have devoted your whole life to serve, to the best of your intelligence and ability and sense of duty, the material and moral interests of India.

It is surprising that not only his friends in England but also those in India should have thought Dadabhai was then an invalid. When Sir George Clarke had expressed a desire to see him at his residence, Dadabhai's friends warned him that it would be too great a strain on Dadabhai and would involve great risk. The idea was abandoned for two years. Two years later, Hormusji Wadya informed him that Dadabhai was in such good health that he would enjoy receiving visitors and even discussing politics.

Dadabhai had a long interview with Chirol on April 23. What transpired no one knew. A laconic note in Dadabhai's own hand merely tells us, "gave copy of correspondence with Lord Morley and Lord Minto when he called to see me, also copy of extract from letter to Lord George Hamilton."

The work of propaganda was thus continued even during his declining days.

Nothing could suppress India's demand that England's obligations to her should be fulfilled. Day by day it became more and

more vocal through the expanded Legislative Councils. The policy initiated in 1909 had to be carried out to its logical conclusion. The announcement that King George V intended to revisit India to make known in person to his subjects his succession to the Imperial Crown of India stimulated hopes for a peaceful settlement of the political conflict. In his birthday message for the year 1910 Dadabhai recalled the King's previous visit and stressed the hopeful prospects which the contemplated visit opened out for India.

Among their precious and gracious words and acts (he said) we have first the speech at Bombay on 9th November, 1905, when His Majesty as Prince of Wales declared "Love" and "Affection" for the Indian people and an increased and abiding interest in India's wants and problems

Then followed a string of quotations from the King-Emperor's messages and declarations to the Indian people in which he had proclaimed from time to time his desire to abide by the spirit of the noble declarations of Queen Victoria and King Edward VII. Next, he raised the question of reforms for training Indians for self-government and placed simultaneous examinations for the Indian Civil Service first in his list of reforms

On his arrival the King-Emperor saw on every side the stirrings of new life. The interests of the people, he said, would always be as near and dear to him as those of his subjects in other quarters of the globe. Six years before, he had sent from England to India a message of sympathy. On this occasion he gave to India the watchword of hope. "Reading between the lines," said Dadabhai in his manifesto of September 26, 1912, "of all the incidents, despatches, and events of this ever-memorable visit of Their Majesties, it seems that there is thought out and determined upon a new evolution to secure the prosperity of the Indian people."

Thus through those passing phases his buoyant faith perceived the larger movements and changes that were to follow. But how to accelerate the pace towards the goal visualized by him?



Dadabhai submitted that the King-Emperor's desire to give the Indian people the blessings of peace and prosperity could only be attained by giving self-government to India. It was only natural for him to expect that, while political conditions were changing all over the world and while the internal conditions in India were also changing, the Government of India could not alone refuse to move with the times. The fault, he believed, was in the head, not in the heart. Lord Hardinge had brought about a change in the mind; already a friendly policy was being evolved, leading to complete autonomy in provincial affairs.

The fates, however, appeared to be against a peaceful approach to the cherished goal. To his horror Dadabhai heard of an attempt on the life of the good and great Viceroy and of Lady Hardinge at Delhi. It had a very depressing effect on him, but the appointment during the year of a Royal Commission on the Services in India filled him with hope. "I pray," said he, in his birthday manifesto, "that its work may result in securing to our country the justice that has been long delayed. It has been my life-long conviction that simultaneous examination will furnish the only remedy for a great and just grievance."

The question of treatment of Indians in South Africa was not overlooked.

The situation of our countrymen in the Colonies, and particularly in South Africa (he observed), stirs us with deep emotion. They have suffered long and suffered much and have so borne their misfortune as to entitle them to the better regard and protection of His Majesty's Government. I have viewed with deep concern the indifference of the Imperial Government in regard to the recent Act in South Africa. But I shall hope for justice and action.

By this time Versova had become a place of pilgrimage, not only for loving and admiring Indians and Englishmen, but also for the highest authorities in India. After Sir George Clarke, Lord Hardinge, and then Lord Willingdon, honoured Dadabhai with a visit and profited by his exposition of the hopes and aspirations of the people. Such intercourse was not confined to exchange of

courtesies or to sharing domestic joys and sorrows of one another. Whenever the economic or the political situation demanded it, Dadabhai carried on a vigorous correspondence with them.

On February 21, 1913, a letter was addressed jointly to Lord Crewe and Lord Hardinge, asking that the Public Services Commission then conducting its inquiry should be supplied, before it made its report, with "information about the aspects and consequences of the economic factor of the public service" so that they might be able to realize "how much of the moisture which ought to give sustenance to the people of British India was sucked up by Europeans under the existing system of public service."

In one of his Council speeches Lord Hardinge had inferred from certain trade statistics that India's material condition and progress compared favourably with that of any other principal country in the world. Though bowed with the weight of four score years and eight, Dadabhai lost no time in pointing out in a long letter (October 8, 1913) that the interpretation put on the figures was not correct. The subject had been dealt with by him before.<sup>1</sup> He repeated all those arguments and said India's exports brought no gain to India, it was all loss, loss, loss.

The outbreak of the Great War elicited a stirring message from Dadabhai (August 10, 1914)

The War in Europe. What is our—India's—place in it? .

We are above all British citizens of the Great British Empire.

Fighting as the British people are at present in a righteous cause for the good and glory of human dignity and civilization, and, moreover, being the beneficent instrument of our own progress and civilization, our duty is clear to do our—every one's—best to support the British fight with our life and property.

This message struck the right note at that critical moment in the history of the British Empire. Lord Willingdon was extremely pleased with it. "We are here all citizens of our great Empire," said he in a private letter written to Dadabhai (August 11), "and shall show by our attitude our determination to stand

<sup>1</sup> *Vide pp 190 and 446-47, ante*

shoulder to shoulder in the great struggle before us. Truly, India by her loyalty and devotion to the King Emperor, which will be proved during the war, will gain her rightful place in the future in the 'sun' of the British Empire."

Lord Hardinge also wrote to Dadabhai (August 13):

There is a simplicity and sincerity about the words you have addressed to them which will appeal directly to their hearts, and not the less forcibly that you have at times been a fearless critic of Government.

The events that followed form one of the brightest chapters in the history of Indo-British relations. A wave of loyalty spread over the whole country. By handsome contributions of men to the Army and money to the War Fund, and in several other ways, the Princes and the people of India helped the British Empire, to the best of their ability, to wage and win the war.

Exchanging Christmas greetings with his friend W. H. Owen, who regularly corresponded with him from England, Dadabhai wrote:

As I have already said, India has now been able to show its sincere loyalty to the British Empire, and I fully hope that the British people will not fail to be true to the British character of faithfully performing their promises and making the grand British Empire a true Empire of *free* and happy humanity and equal right to all subjects.

Two very interesting letters were received by Dadabhai during the Year. One of these was from Dr. John Pollen, famous Civil Servant of his day and a very old friend of Dadabhai. Congratulating Dadabhai on his ninetieth birthday and stating that his message to the people had certainly helped to nerve the nation's heart and was "in itself a deed," Pollen wrote:

Now I have a great favour to ask. You know I am struggling to carry on the good work you commenced nearly half a century ago in connection with the East India Association. Pennington and I contemplate writing a history of the Association to appear on its 50th birthday, and as you are really the Father, I want

On the other hand is Britain  
 engaged in the present great  
 struggle for some self purpose  
 for extension of her own dominion  
 and power? No. It is simply for  
 keeping her word of honour and for  
 righteously discharging a solemn  
 obligation for the peace and welfare  
 of minor and weak powers.

Fighting as the British people are  
 now at present in a righteous  
 cause to the good and glory of  
 human dignity and civilization  
 and moreover being the bespoken  
 instrument of our own progress  
 and civilization our duty is  
 clear, & do our every one's endeavour  
 to support the British fight with  
 our life and property.

DADABHAI'S HANDWRITING

A message to the Indian people on the outbreak of the Great War



you to send me a few words of blessing. It would be too much to ask you to recall any details of the birth of the Association. These we can gather up from your excellent speeches of the day, but if you could send us now a few words of encouraging preface, we could doubtless make a start at once. As I write, I have before me your picture published by the *Times of India*, and it would form a good frontispiece to the history of our Association.

There are moments when even the best of friends have to be displeased or disobliged. This was one. Pleased and grateful as he was to receive the letter, Dadabhai could not help refusing the "favour" asked for. "Unfortunately," he replied, "I have some unfavourable opinion about the present Association, and I should not like to write at present anything unpleasant. I thank you for your kind opinion about my work in the Association."

Although he said little about it, Dadabhai was sick at heart till the end of his life that this organization that he had reared for the good of India did not lend a helping hand in the struggle for the political elevation of his countrymen. Recently, however, the activities of the Association have been renewed, and it may be hoped that it may yet play an honourable part in the final stages of the political evolution of India.

A very cheering reminder of the early days spent in England was a letter (October 10) from Miss Annie Archer, one of the members of the family with whom Dadabhai had been on intimate terms, a friendship which, as we have seen, was viewed with disfavour by his orthodox partner, Muncherji Cama.<sup>1</sup>

I read with great interest (she said) your excellent letter in *The Times* and since then, how many of your people have given their practical evidence of goodwill, and I am sure England values it very highly, especially in these terrible days, one can think, talk and read of no other subject but the war. The loss of life has been enormous and the amount of sufferings not only of our men but the poor women and children is heart-rending. . . . I felt I should just like to send a word of remembrance to you, and I very often picture you sitting in "Mr. Dadabhai's Chair,"

<sup>1</sup> Vide p. 87

which is still as good as ever, in my dining-room, how often you have sat in it, and told us such interesting details of your religion and customs, and how we all enjoyed your visits.

What a fine unexpected pleasure (replied Dadabhai) to receive it from one of my earliest and best friends in England! I remember well the days of my visits, spending my evenings among the kind family of Dr Archer, sitting in "Mr Dadabhai's Chair" (good chair), with Annie with a kind sisterly interest tenderly seeing to my comforts

Dadabhai's next birthday synchronized with one of the most sensational incidents in his life Mrs Annie Besant, who had then switched off to politics from metaphysics, was trying to form a Home Rule League in India It was announced in September 1915 in her organ, the *Commonweal*, that it had been decided to start the League with "Home Rule for India" as its only object, as an auxiliary to the National Congress in India and its British Committee in England "Its general aim will be," it was stated, "to educate the people and to give to the demand of the Congress for self-government . . the strength of a nation which has realized itself, and which, through its national organization, has voiced its claim for years, only to see it rejected." Then followed the sensational news that Dadabhai had consented to be President

In the quiet of Versova, Dadabhai was a moral and spiritual force Placed as he was on a pinnacle, above all earthly strife and turmoil of politics, and adored by the whole of India, irrespective of class, or creed, or party, none expected that Dadabhai would once more descend from that pinnacle to the slippery path of active politics His friends and admirers were, therefore, amazed to read the announcement Most of the Congressmen considered it outrageous that another organization should be brought into being, to pursue the same object which formed the principal plank in the Congress programme, namely, self-government. They suspected that the extremists would utilize it merely to wreck the Congress. Besides, the majority of the people were not enamoured of the methods of the gifted but

volatile lady who, it was understood, would be at the helm of affairs of the League. Others, however, thought that while the Congress remained a deliberative body, there should be an organization to do the day-to-day, active, propagandist work for securing Home Rule.

What about your Presidentship of the Home Rule League (asked Wacha) which Mrs. Besant is broadly advertising? . . . We do not approve of the methods of Mrs. Besant who late in the day has come forward to support the Congress movement. . . . We are alarmed that the way in which she is going about on her own responsibility, supported from behind by the extremists, is a distinct menace to the peaceful progress of our country.

Not merely Congress colleagues but all the world seemed anxious to know whether Dadabhai had really accepted the presidentship. He therefore announced publicly (September 28) that it was true that he had given his consent to be President on certain conditions.

How did it happen? Mrs. Besant wanted not only Dadabhai, but also S. Subrahmania Aiyar and Wedderburn to join the League, as she believed that the counsel of such veterans, holding in old age to the ideals of their youth, and looking hopefully and confidently to the Promised Land, veterans who could inspire as well as lead, would be invaluable. Subrahmania Aiyar had agreed to be President of the Indian Division, and it was hoped Wedderburn would accept the Presidentship of the English Division of the League. To induce Dadabhai to agree to be the head of the movement, Mrs. Besant, with her lieutenant, Mr. B. P. Wadia, paid him a personal visit. She had stood beside him in his memorable fight for election to Parliament in 1892. Dadabhai recalled that fact in his very first words of cordial greeting. She implored him to be at the head of the League. "We are all getting old," she said; "let us combine to give a strong lead to the younger people and guide their energy into wisely chosen channels."

"You old!" exclaimed Dadabhai, with eyes beaming with kindness, "you old! Why you (seventy) are as far away from me



(ninety) as Homi (pointing to Dadina, who was sitting next to them) is away from you!"

In the course of the conversation the veteran champion of Home Rule for Ireland and the standard-bearer of self-government for India welcomed the idea of forming a League. He also expressed his warm approval of the way in which *New India* (Mrs. Besant's paper) claimed self-government for India as a right, not as a boon.

"I read *New India* daily," he added. "England understands plain speaking and does not resent it. Appeal to the English sense of justice and fair play and take it for granted that England will do justice, when she understands. I have always done so."

With clear political insight Dadabhai consented to be the President of the League, although he anticipated that some of his life-long friends would disapprove of what they might regard as an alliance with the extremist section. One of the conditions he imposed was that he should not be called upon for any active work or for speaking or writing, as he was not competent to undertake any such work at his age. He also asked, and Mrs. Besant agreed, that the League must not be turned against the Congress.

Not knowing in detail how the existence of the Congress was threatened during those days, Dadabhai did not realize the danger inherent in starting an all-India institution with the same methods and ideals as the Congress had and with young rebellious blood infused in it. All his thoughts were then centred in the fulfilment of his dream—*Swaraj*. What objection could there be in having a new auxiliary organization to press forward the claims of the country for home rule? India had bought admittance into the world-war with her best blood. Her brave sons were then laying down their lives with the sons of the British Empire in defending the common flag. Could they, after the termination of hostilities, be denied any longer their rights as British citizens? He, for one, saw no reason why Mrs. Besant should not go forward with her project. She herself, however, realized the strength and the significance of the opposition.

About this time Wedderburn issued jointly with Sir Krishna Gupta a note in which were summarized the practical steps to get India placed in a position analogous to that enjoyed by the self-governing colonies. He informed Mrs. Besant that it appeared to him and to his friends whom he had consulted that as he was Chairman of the British Committee of the Congress, it was undesirable that he should be the local head of another political association not directly affiliated to the Congress. As regards objects, there was no difference of opinion between the two bodies, but there was a difference as regards tactics.

Though we wish an authoritative scheme to be prepared (said he), we are not in favour of public action until peace is in sight, whereas you propose a vigorous agitation in the Press and on the platform. At the present moment such a popular agitation in this country is not possible. No newspaper would support it, and we could get no one to come to public meetings. I had a long talk with Lady Emily Lytens this morning, and explained to her the difficulties and danger of the situation. It will be disastrous for the cause of self-government if there is conflict among Congress supporters. Already our opponents contend that self-government for India is impossible on account of the enmity between Hindus and Mahomedans, and it will strengthen their case if they can say that even the reformers cannot agree among themselves. I would, therefore, strongly recommend that some *modus vivendi* should be arrived at, so that we may present an unbroken front.

Wedderburn wrote also to Dadabhai (October 27):

I must not conceal from you that your accepting the Presidency of the Indian "Home Rule League" has caused considerable perturbation to friends in this country. You and I agree so completely on material matters, that we have only to consider the question of tactics and I send you herewith copy of two letters I have addressed to Mrs. Besant.

Such protests were, however, of no avail. The unbending uprightness, which had marked every phase of his public and private life, was proof against all entreaties that Dadabhai should

renounce the Presidentship. Abandoning all hope of inducing him to change his mind, Wacha wrote:

I feel that it is impossible to convince you when you are of another mind, in ignorance of facts. My respect for you is great, and in view of that respect I hold my tongue. All that I will venture to say is this, that by allowing your name to be associated with the League as its President you are in reality assisting those who by indirect and tortuous means are trying to wreck the Congress which you and other founders have built up with such care, wisdom and foresight during the last thirty years.

The veteran's rejoinder, clinching the issue, revealed the working of his mind. Although often deceived, the erstwhile Professor of Mathematics insisted till the last day of his life that every theory of suspicion should be demonstrated like a theorem in geometry, before he could act on it. In this particular case he saw no reason to discountenance a movement, full of promise for the country's good, merely because his friends suspected that its promoters would work in a manner prejudicial to the Congress. He, therefore, told Wacha (November 14):

Sir W. Wedderburn in his letter to you of 18th October (and of which you have kindly sent me a copy) says, "The situation needs the greatest care and discretion and it is essential that all well-wishers of India—and the Empire—should work together, putting aside all personal differences. . . ." Sir W. W. next asks you to send to him by early mail a concise memorandum of the view of affairs taken by our Congress friends (and at present Mrs. Besant also stands out as one of Congress's best friends). *I have no doubt you are sending such memorandum. . . .* The other day when Wadya and you kindly saw me upon this subject we had agreed that we had better make the best of our position and that if you could at any time make out a clear case of harm done to the Congress by the League, I could easily resign. . . . So far Mrs. Besant has openly kept on saying that she would do nothing to injure the Congress and we have to keep her to her word. Sir W. W. particularly advises us in his letter to you "the situation needs the greatest care and discretion."

Anxious as Mrs. Besant was to launch the League with the goodwill of the Congress, she decided to go slow. It was arranged that the question should be discussed, about the time of the Congress Session in December, at a conference of the leading members of the Congress and of the All-India Moslem League. A Conference was held accordingly, but it could not come to a definite understanding. Even during the year 1916 the scheme did not materialize. This delay saved Dadabhai from a very embarrassing situation. Before the League was duly constituted in the following year, his day of political activity was over. The quiet eventide of rest had come to him at last.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE END

THE quietest year of Dadabhai's life was 1916; even so, it is memorable for a unique event. Rather late in the day, the Bombay University decided to confer on Dadabhai and Pherozeshah Mehta the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws. That University could not have been accused of lavishness in the distribution of the highest distinction within its gift. During the thirty years that had elapsed since the institution of the degree, it had been conferred only four times. Pherozeshah Mehta died before the day fixed for the special Convocation for conferring the degree (January 18). Dadabhai was mercifully spared. In point of time he belonged to pre-University days, but he was a product of the renaissance which had given birth to the University and had from the beginning a share in the new intellectual life. Dadabhai summed up in his life, said the erudite Vice-Chancellor, the Rev. Dr. D. Mackichan, in his address on the occasion, the history of that great intellectual revival. Into the serene academic atmosphere of the University the heated air of politics should not enter. Nevertheless, a reference to Dadabhai's political career could scarcely have been avoided.

This only I should like to be permitted to say (said the Vice-Chancellor) regarding a career which has been so largely concerned with the problems of the government of India that the honour and success of that career were due in large measure to the high qualities of personal life and character which were so conspicuous in every part of it. Men of all shades of political opinion were quick to discern the transparent honesty, the simplicity of purpose, the unselfish patriotism of the man who sought to interpret to Great Britain the needs and aspirations of his countrymen. British political life is peculiarly sensitive to character. India's

Grand Old Man owes as much to the influence of a blameless character as did his great prototype in Britain to the conviction which had wrought itself into the British mind regarding the loftiness of his motives and the purity of his life. While in this University we do not concern ourselves with politics, we are deeply concerned with character, and today we pay the tribute of our admiration to Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji's patience under adversities and disappointments, to his unwearied perseverance in the maintenance of his convictions and to the unselfish love of his country and nation which inspired him throughout his many conflicts.

There was a grave risk in the exertion which Dadabhai had undertaken in appearing in person at the Convocation. Dadabhai braved it, and the Fellows of the University and the general public were rejoiced to find that the venerable recipient of the academic distinction was none the worse for it. After the Convocation he took a drive in the City. A procession was formed outside the precincts of the University. Dadabhai took his seat in a motor car with his daughter Manekbai and her husband Dadina. The car was followed by those of many leading citizens. The streets were thronged with admiring crowds, and the scenes of enthusiasm throughout the journey to Pedder Road reminded one of the pageants of the earlier days. They marked the most fitting recognition of his worth and work. All honours paled before such a testimony of popular affection and esteem.

The time for the realization of Dadabhai's dream of self-government was drawing near. Negotiations were going on between the Viceroy and the Secretary of State. Congress workers in the East and in the West and their British friends were busy preparing proposals for constitutional reforms which would satisfy the aspirations of the rising generation of India. An essential principle of self-government had already been indicated by Lord Hardinge, namely, provincial autonomy, with a gradual transfer of authority from officials to the representatives of the people. It was believed that the representations of a United India on so vital a problem

would receive a fair hearing from the British people and the Imperial Parliament.

Dadabhai's earnest wish and prayer was that he might live to witness the inauguration of the reforms which would place India securely on the road to self-government. He was, however, taken suddenly ill two months before the declaration of August 20, 1917, was made, guaranteeing increased association of Indians in every branch of the Administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire, guaranteeing, that is to say, practically all that Dadabhai was demanding.

It was a case of general debility, but it caused grave concern. Dadabhai was removed from his house in Versova to Palitana House, Cumballa Hill, Bombay, the residence of Mr. Maneck Captain. Here, on June 30, the greatest of great Indians of the day passed away peacefully, surrounded by all the members of his family, except his two daughters who were in Kashmere.

After his body was consigned to the Tower of Silence, according to Parsi rites, Sir Narayenrao Chandavarkar paid a glowing tribute to his memory:

If we take stock of his life and his example, may I not say with perfect justice and truth that in his career, in all he did, in all he suffered, and in all he taught, he was the Prophet Zoroaster's religion personified, because he was the man more than anybody else of pure thought, of pure speech and of pure deeds. . . . The sun that rose, just ninety-three years ago, over India is set, but, I say, it is set to rise again in the form of regenerated India, for Dadabhai lived and worked for us with a devotion which must remain for all of us an inspiring example.

Many a tribute poured in from the four corners of the Globe, many a public meeting was held, many a monument was raised and is still being raised to his memory, but what monument could be greater than the rejuvenated India he left behind?

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